



FUTURESECOLOGY

AMG Utility Solutions

Church Bank, Jarrow

BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (BIA)

Report Reference Number: FE568/BIA01

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1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The following report has been prepared by Futures Ecology Ltd. on behalf of AMG Utility Solutions. This summary report presents the results of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) calculations using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) Calculation Tool produced in respect of proposals for the development of land at Church Bank, Jarrow (grid reference: NZ 33945 64992).

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 1.2 The Site is c. 1.96ha in extent and comprises mostly hardstanding and large industrial buildings. There are some areas of ephemeral/short perennial and tall ruderal, as well as a strip of broadleaved woodland down the centre of the Site and a number of individual trees along the Site boundary.
- 1.3 The Site is bound by Church Bank to the west, the A185 to the south, and a large Port of Tyne carpark to the east. To the north lies the River Don set behind a narrow strip of woodland. The Site is located on the edge of a large industrial area in Jarrow, South Tyneside, c. 8km east of the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 1.4 The development proposals comprise an outline planning application for the installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure and access, with all matters reserved.

2.0 **METHODOLOGY**

FIELD SURVEY – HABITATS

Personnel

- 2.1 The initial extended Phase 1 Survey and protected species survey assessment was conducted by D. Heppenstall BSc (Hons) and J. Lally MSc, BSc (Hons). The River Condition Assessment (RCA) was conducted by J. Lally.
- 2.2 D. Heppenstall has over 1 years' experience of conducting and leading field surveys for protected species across a wide range of sites. J. Lally has 2 years' experience of conducting and leading field surveys across a wide range of sites. J. Lally is able to conduct River Condition Assessments (RCA) following certification as a Qualified Surveyor in September 2024 by the Cartographer RCA Team and RGS.
- 2.3 Survey methodology followed guidance from Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) 2016¹ comprising a walkover of the survey area mapping (using JNCC standard habitat codes) and broadly describing and classifying the principal habitat types and identifying the dominant plant species present within each habitat type, noting any

¹ JNCC (2016) *Handbook for Phase1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit*. ISBN 0 86139 636 7

features of interest. The frequencies at which plant species occurred were noted using the DAFOR² method³. Whilst the plant species lists obtained should not be regarded as exhaustive, sufficient information was obtained to determine broad habitat types.

- 2.4 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric works best where habitat types are classified using the UK Habitats Classification methodology (UKHab Ltd., 2023)⁴. Therefore, habitats were also described and evaluated in accordance with the UK Habitats Classification methods aligning the assessed habitats with the Biodiversity Metric habitat types.
- 2.5 The surveys used were sufficient to determine the Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat types present onsite and to fully inform the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM). This information was used to adequately map the onsite habitats to inform the BIA.
- 2.6 A summary of the habitats present onsite is provided within the report including the UK Hab equivalent habitats for the purpose of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA).

Habitat Condition Assessment

- 2.7 Habitat condition was assessed and assigned during the Phase 1 assessment following the guidance from the 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology' excel document (Natural England, February 2024) which accompanies the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Assessment criteria were followed for each broad habitat type, to determine the condition of each habitat.

Soil Type

- 2.8 Soil type was determined from Land Information System (LandIS)⁵.

Strategic Significance

- 2.9 Strategic significance is the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type.
- 2.10 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric assigns strategic significance based on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and descriptions set out in table 7 of the Statutory Metric User Guide (July 2024)⁶.
- 2.11 In the absence of an LNRS, the relevant planning authority should specify alternative documents for assigning strategic significance whilst an LNRS is put in place. The strategic significance is then based on the alternative documents and the descriptions set out in table 8 of the Statutory Metric User Guide (July 2024)⁷. If no alternative documents are specified by the relevant planning authority medium strategic significance can be assigned when the criteria in table 8 are met.

² DAFOR: D=dominant, A=abundant, F=frequent, O=occasional, R=Rare, L=Locally

³ WJ Sutherland (August 2006) Ecological Census Techniques. A Handbook, 2nd Edition. ISBN: 9780521606363

⁴ UKHab Ltd. (July 2023) UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 <https://ukhab.org/>

⁵ <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

⁶ DEFRA (February 2024) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. User Guide.

⁷ DEFRA (February 2024) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. User Guide.

2.12 Gateshead Council has been appointed by DEFRA to be the Responsible Authority⁸ to lead on the development of the LNRS for South of Tyne and Wear. However, Gateshead Council has not produced a LNRS. Gateshead Council has not specified any alternative documents. Despite this, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case South Tyneside Council (STC), has produced strategic significance guidance as part of their local plan⁹

2.13 The guidance specified by STC sets out the following for assigning strategic significance:

Where ecologically appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain is demonstrated not to be deliverable onsite, the applicant shall prioritise the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain off-site in accordance with the following locational hierarchy:

- *Within the strategic nature recovery network within South Tyneside.*
- *Within South Tyneside, outside of the strategic nature recovery network.*
- *Within the wider South of Tyne and Wear Local Nature Recovery Strategy Area.*
- *Within Gateshead or Sunderland, outside the strategic nature recovery network*
- *Within a neighbouring Local Nature Recovery Strategy area, preferentially within the strategic nature recovery network.*
- *Within a neighbouring National Character Area*

The strategic network as referred to in Policy 35 is considered to be the Wildlife Corridor Network as identified in Inset Map 29, or the Local Nature Recovery Strategy within South Tyneside once confirmed. The delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain within this area will receive a higher biodiversity value in the biodiversity metric than they would in other locations as they are considered to be in a more strategic location for nature recovery. It is considered that where desirable, BNG enhancements should seek to enhance and support green and blue infrastructure networks within South Tyneside.

BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (BIA)

2.14 To quantify deliverable net gain for the site, the baseline value of the habitats within the site have been calculated utilising the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

Survey Limitations

2.15 Due to ongoing works, certain areas in the north of the site were restricted, therefore the habitats and their conditions in these areas had to be approximated at a distance and supplemented by aerial photography.

2.16 All surveys were carried out during the optimal period for surveys (April – September).

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategies-areas-and-responsible-authorities#full-publication-update-history>

⁹ [South Tyneside Council | Local Plan 2023 - 2040](#)

3.0 **BASELINE ECOLOGY**

- 3.1 The baseline habitats are shown on Figure 1.
- 3.2 A summary of the habitats present is provided in Table 1 below. This includes the Biodiversity Metric Habitat Type and the equivalent Phase 1 habitats, as well as a brief description of the habitats and the condition assessments for the purpose of the BIA.
- 3.3 The habitat condition assessment sheets are provided in Appendix B.

Table 1: Summary of Habitats

Phase 1 Habitat	Biodiversity Metric Habitat Type	Brief Description and Habitat Condition Assessment (HCA)
Area Habitats		
Buildings	Developed land; sealed surface; u1b	Multiple buildings dotted around site. Condition assessment: N/A
Hardstanding	Developed land; sealed surface; u1b	Large areas of hardstanding around the site. Condition assessment: N/A
Broadleaved Woodland - Plantation	Other woodland; broadleaved; w1g	Areas of broadleaved woodland, with a larger parcel in the south and small pockets in the north of the site. Condition assessment: Poor (25/39)
Cultivated/disturbed land – Ephemeral/Short perennial	Ruderal/ephemeral; u81	Tracts of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation near the eastern and western boundary of the site. Passes: A, B, C; Fails: None Condition assessment: Good
Other tall herb and fern - ruderal	Tall forbs; g16	Areas of tall forbs towards the west of the site. Passes: A, B; Fails: C Condition assessment: Moderate
Scrub – dense/continuous	Mixed scrub; h3h	Small area of mixed scrub on the southern boundary of the site. Passes: A; Fails: B, C, D, E Condition assessment: Poor
Scrub – dense/continuous	Bramble scrub; h3d	Small area of mixed scrub on the southern boundary of the site. Condition assessment: N/A
Broadleaved tree	Urban tree; 200	Two small non-native trees. Passes: B, D, F; Fails: A, C, E Condition assessment: Moderate
		One medium non-native tree. Passes: B, D, F; Fails: A, C, E Condition assessment: Moderate
		Three small native trees. Passes: A, B, D, F; Fails: C, E Condition assessment: Moderate
		1 medium native tree. Passes: A, B, D, F; Fails: C, E Condition assessment: Moderate

Soil Type

- 3.4 The site is located entirely within a parcel described as Soilscape 18; this can be described as *slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils*. Broader details of this soil structure can be found below:

- Drainage: Impeded drainage
- Fertility: Moderate
- Landcover: Grassland and arable some woodland
- Habitats: Seasonally wet pastures and woodlands
- Carbon: Low

Strategic Significance

- 3.5 Strategic significance has been applied to the baseline habitats as described in the methodology.
- 3.6 Table 2 provides a summary of the strategic significance applied to the baseline habitats.

Table 2: Summary of Strategic Significance of Baseline Habitats

Strategic Significance	Applicable habitats	Justification for Statutory Significance applied
High	Other Woodland; Broadleaved (larger parcel)	Falls within the South Tyneside strategic nature recovery network.
Low	All other habitats.	Outside the South Tyneside strategic nature recovery network.

Baseline Summary

- 3.7 From the completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the value of the existing onsite habitats is **2.98 Habitat Units** (see Appendix A).

4.0 BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 In accordance with the NPPF (December 2024)¹⁰ and Policy SP21: Natural Environment of the South Tyneside Council Local Plan¹¹ the aim is to generate a measurable net gain for biodiversity.
- 4.2 The Environment Act 2021¹² became mandatory on 12th February 2024 and requires a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity units.

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (December 2024). National Planning Policy Framework. London

¹¹ https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/6874/Publication-Draft-Local-Plan-2023-2040/pdf/Publication_Draft_Local_Plan_2023_to_2040.pdf?m=1704711127857

¹² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

Baseline Habitats

- 4.3 The majority of existing habitats within the site are of low nature conservation value (buildings, hardstanding, ruderal/ephemeral, tall forbs). These habitats were of low or very low distinctiveness within the metric. However, a number of habitats (individual trees, other woodland; broadleaved, mixed scrub, bramble scrub) are of a higher nature conservation value and are of medium distinctiveness in the metric.

Retained Habitats

- 4.4 The majority of the woodland, scrub, and individual trees are to be retained.

Created Habitats

- 4.5 Prior to completed landscaping plans, current proposals comprise a BESS and associated infrastructure [Urban: developed land; sealed surface]. Areas along the western and southern boundaries will comprise a species-rich meadow [Grassland: other neutral grassland] and small area of mixed scrub [Heathland and scrub: mixed scrub].

Enhanced Habitats

- 4.6 The retained areas of broadleaved woodland will be enhanced from Poor to Moderate condition, via the management/removal of Japanese knotweed, an invasive and non-native species (INNS). The mixed scrub will be enhanced from Poor to Moderate condition, via the removal of cotoneaster species and management to create a well-developed edge.

Summary

- 4.7 Post-development, the on-site habitat retention, creation and enhancement (Figure 2) with long-term management (for a minimum of 30 years) will achieve 3.18 Habitat Units. This a total net change of +0.20 Habitat Units, which equates to a +6.64% net gain.

Trading rules

- 4.8 The proposals for the application Site **do satisfy** the Habitat Unit trading rules.

Unit shortfall summary

- 4.9 Given the loss of habitats on-site, **3.28 Habitat Units** are required to provide a 10% net gain overall. With the current proposed habitats, there is a **0.10 Unit Deficit**.

ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

- 4.10 The metric calculations do not account for the following additional enhancement measures that may be provided within the development proposals as these cannot be quantified using the SBM calculator. The inclusion of the following biodiversity enhancements would be considered a benefit to biodiversity.
- Provision of bat and bird boxes throughout the site;

- Installation of gaps for hedgehogs within boundary treatments (where feasible) to maintain connectivity through the site for hedgehogs;
- Provision of invertebrate boxes or bee bricks;
- Log piles to act as refugia for a range of species within areas of open space.

5.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 As the development proposals cannot deliver a net gain on-site in Habitat Units, there is a requirement to secure a net gain via an alternative mechanism. This could include a combination of the following:
- 5.2 Utilising off-site land under the control of the applicant to deliver the off-site requirement. The land should ideally be located in a strategic ecologically beneficial location.
- 5.3 A Biodiversity Credit is calculated based on the Biodiversity Units required for the LPA or another third-party Habitat Bank (to be approved by the LPA) to take on responsibility to deliver the net gain for biodiversity.

6.0 **GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 The CIEEM Good Practice Principles for Development¹³ provide an industry-standard to demonstrate that development projects have followed best practice. Table 3 below provides a summary of how these principles have been followed throughout this project.

Table 3: Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development Summary

Principle	Justification of measures in place to achieve each Principle
Principle 1: Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision-makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.	Certain losses of habitats could not be avoided and are to be lost under the footprint of the development. These losses will be compensated through an off-site contribution (to be confirmed). Where possible, habitats have been retained (broadleaved woodland, scrub, boundary trees).
Principle 2: Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity - these impacts cannot be offset to achieve No Net Loss or Net Gain.	No irreplaceable habitats are present on-site, all baseline habitats are able to be offset (if required).

¹³ <https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development/>

Principle 3: Be inclusive and equitable Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to Net Gain. Achieve Net Gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible, and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.	The metric results were provided as soon as available and disseminated to all relevant parties.
Principle 4: Address risks Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving Net Gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.	There is currently a net gain (however less than 10%) in Area Habitat Units, although a measurable net gain contribution will be secured by utilising off-site units (to be confirmed). This approach will be confirmed to provide certainty.
Principle 5: Make a measurable Net Gain contribution Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.	There is currently a net gain (however less than 10%) in Area Units, although a measurable net gain contribution will be secured by utilising off-site units (to be confirmed).
Principle 6: Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly-justified choices when: • Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses • Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation • Achieving Net Gain locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels • Enhancing existing or creating new habitat • Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity	The net gain in Area Habitat Units off-site (to be determined) will have a benefit for biodiversity and incorporate habitats which will have benefits for local wildlife populations, such as bats, nesting birds, hedgehogs, amphibians, invertebrates etc.
Principle 7: Be additional Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).	The net gains in Area Habitat Units off-site (to be determined) would not occur in the absence of this exercise.

Principle 8: Create a Net Gain legacy Ensure Net Gain generates long-term benefits by: • Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure Net Gain in perpetuity¹⁴ • Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management • Designing Net Gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change • Mitigating risks from other land uses • Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another • Supporting local-level management of Net Gain activities	Long-term management of the habitats created will be secured under a legal agreement.
Principle 9: Optimise sustainability Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy	The net gains in Area Habitat Units off-site (to be determined) will have a benefit for biodiversity and people.
Principle 10: Be transparent Communicate all Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders	Net gain information has been communicated in a transparent and timely manner.

¹⁴ Biodiversity compensation should be planned for a sustained Net Gain over the longest possible timeframe. For development in the UK, the expectation is that compensation sites will be secured for at least the lifetime of the development (e.g. often 25-30 years) with the objective of Net Gain management continuing in the future.

APPENDIX A: STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC (SBM)

The headline results are provided below. Please see the accompanying SBM (excel document) for further details.

Church Bank, Jarrow, FE568		Return to results menu		
Headline Results				
Scroll down for final results ▲				
On-site baseline	Area habitat units	2.98		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	3.18		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.20	6.64%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
Un-site net gain is less than target set ▲				
Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Area 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)	Area habitat units	0.20		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area 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)	Area habitat units	0.20		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	6.64%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	2.98	3.28	0.10
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
				No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
				No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓
Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲				



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Key

 Site Boundary

Pre-development Habitats

-  Buildings
[Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
-  Hardstanding
[Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
-  Cultivated/disturbed land - Ephemeral/short perennial
[Sparsely vegetated land: Ruderal/Ephemeral]
-  Other tall herb and fern - ruderal
[Sparsely vegetated land: Ruderal/Ephemeral]
-  Scrub - dense/continuous
[Heathland and shrub: Mixed scrub]
-  Scrub - dense/continuous
[Heathland and shrub: Bramble scrub]
-  Broadleaved woodland - plantation
[Woodland and forest: Other woodland; broadleaved]
-  Small individual tree
[Individual tree: Urban tree]
-  Medium individual tree
[Individual tree: Urban tree]

Client: AMG Utility Solutions
Project: Church Bank, Jarrow
Title: Figure 1 - Baseline Habitat Plan

Plan Reference: FE568_01
Project Reference: FE568
Report Reference: BIA01

Author: JL/DH
Date: 28/10/2025
Scale: 1:1,000



C:\Users\Devi.Heppenstall\Futures Ecology Ltd\James.Eales - Projects\FE568 Church Bank, Jarrow\QGIS\1_Plans\FE568_Biodiversity Net Gain Plan.qgs
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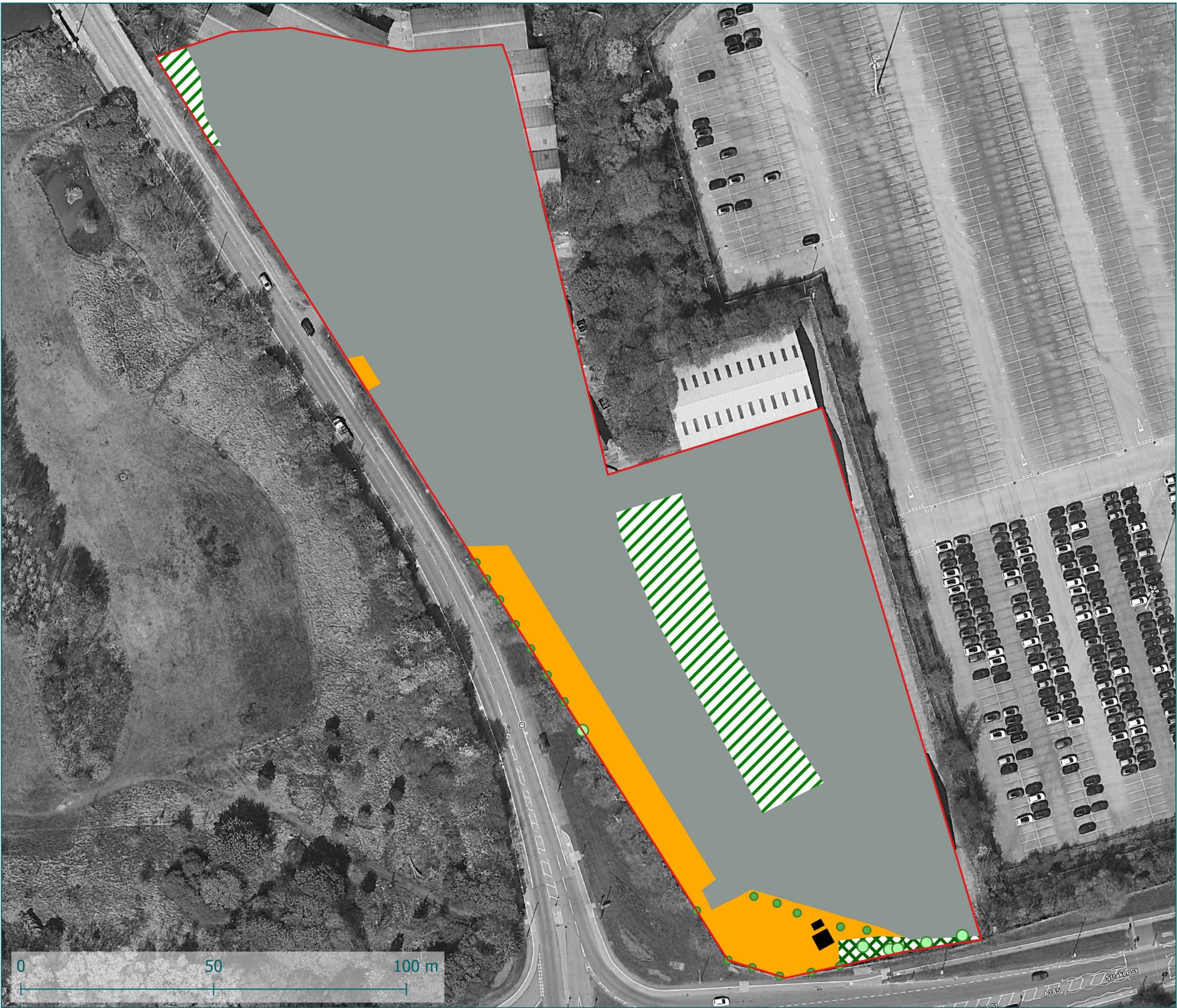
Unit 9, The Tangent Business Hub, Weighbridge Road, Shirebrook, Mansfield, Derbyshire, NG20 8RX
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Key

 Site Boundary

Post-development Habitats

-  Buildings
[Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
-  Hardstanding
[Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
-  Neutral grassland - semi-improved
[Grassland: Other neutral grassland]
-  Scrub - dense/continuous
[Heathland and shrub: Mixed scrub]
-  Broadleaved woodland - plantation
[Woodland and forest: Other woodland; broadleaved]
-  Small individual tree
[Individual tree: Urban tree]
-  Retained tree



Client: AMG Utility Solutions
Project: Church Bank, Jarrow
Title: Figure 2 - Proposed Habitat Plan

Plan Reference: FE568_02
Project Reference: FE568
Report Reference: BIA01

Author: DH
Date: 28/10/2025
Scale: 1:1,000



C:\Users\Devi.Heppenstall\Futures Ecology Ltd\James.Eales - Projects\FE568 Church Bank, Jarrow\QGIS\1_Plans\FE568_Biodiversity Net Gain Plan.qgs
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