Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Haven Banks Retail Park, Exeter

13th July 2022

TG Report No. 14769_R02a_JS_JM_CW

Tyler Grange

Section 1: Introduction

1.1. Tyler Grange Group Ltd. were instructed by Union 4 Planning in April 2022 to undertake an ecological assessment of the Haven Banks Retail Park, Exeter, Devon, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is centred on National Grid Reference SX 91970 91837.

1.2. The site is located within the city of Exeter, situated at the site of the existing Haven Banks Retail Park. The site's northern and southern boundaries are defined by residential housing. The site's western boundary is defined by Water Lane, beyond which is more residential housing. The eastern boundary meets the existing Activity Centre, beyond which is Haven Road and the River Exe beyond that.

1.3. A planning application for the demolition of the existing retail building and the redevelopment of the site to form a 440-home apartment complex, including retail and leisure facilities, access, car parking and landscaping is to be submitted to Exeter City Council.

1.4. In support of this planning application, an Ecological Assessment has been completed by Tyler Grange to help inform the design of the scheme to avoid impacts, ensure that opportunities for protected species are maintained and enhanced and that biodiversity is increased. Further detail of the surveys undertaken are provided within the Ecological Assessment report produced by Tyler Grange in 2022 (ref: **14769_R01**).

1.5. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment has also been completed on the proposals in order to establish the biodiversity value of the site and to demonstrate the delivery of a net gain in biodiversity units.

1.6. As part of the BNG process, all site habitats were assessed with reference to the UK Habitat Classification (Butcher *et al*, 2020[1]) and the Biodiversity Metric technical supplement (Panks *et al* 2022[2]) to determine their condition and ecological importance. Further detail on the surveys undertaken are provided within the Ecological Assessment report produced by Tyler Grange (ref: **14203_R01**).

1.7. **Plan 14769/P02** shows the existing habitats present at the site and the landscape proposals shows the habitat creation and enhancements that are proposed.

Butcher, B. Carey, P. Edmonds, R. Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020) UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V.1.1.
Panks, S. White, N. Newsome, A. Nash, M. Potter, J. Heydon, M. Mayhew, E. Alvarez, M. Russell, T. Cashon, C. Goddard, F. Scott, S.J. Heaver, M. Scott, S.H. Treweek, J. Butcher B. and Stone D. (2022). Biodiversity metric 3.1: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide. Natural England.

Section 2: Existing Baseline

2.1. The site is an existing retail park, and habitats present comprise one large buildings and hardstanding carparking areas, bound by introduced shrub planting and roads. A number of scattered trees are present within the areas of introduced shrub, and three are located within the centre of the carparking area (see **Plan 14769/P02**).

Buildings

2.2. A single large building, separated internally into three units is present at the site. In accordance with the UKHab (Butcher *et al*, 2020) this building comprise urban/built form and as such no condition assessment is required.

Hardstanding

2.3. Extensive areas of tarmac hardstanding are present across the site comprising access roads, carparks and pathways. This habitat comprises urban built form and as such no condition assessment is required.

Introduced Shrub

2.4. Areas of introduced shrub are planted along the northern and western boundary the site and in conjunction with the carparking area. These areas comprise cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis* and cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, as well as ivy *Hedera helix* present in places around the bases of plants in several areas.

2.5. This habitat is dominated by non-native species and is therefore automatically classified as being of poor condition (Panks *et al*, 2022) with no condition assessment is required.

2.6. *Urban trees*

2.7. A mixture of native trees are planted around the boundaries of the site, within the areas of introduced shrub. The species present include Norway Maple *Acer platanoides*, sycamore maple *Acer pseudoplatanus*, whitebeam *Sorbus aria* and London plane *Platanus x acerifolia.*

2.8. In addition, three London plane trees are planted in a line that runs through the middle of the main carparking area. Overall the trees on site are assessed as being of poor condition.

Section 3: Proposals

3.1. The proposals for the site have been designed to avoid ecological impacts where possible, with several of the trees, which are the habitats of highest ecological importance, to be retained and buffered from any works. Nonetheless, the proposals will require the loss of introduced shrub, trees, buildings and hardstanding.

3.2. To compensate for these losses of habitat, extensive new native and ornamental planting will occur which will also improve connectivity throughout the site and provide an overall enhancement for biodiversity.

3.3. The creation of habitats including trees, wildflower grassland and introduced shrub will also increase the floristic diversity at the site, increasing opportunities available to wildlife such as bats, birds and invertebrates, potentially attracting a more diverse species assemblage to the site post-development.

3.4. Further detail on the habitat creation and enhancement measures that will occur at the site are provided in the Ecological Assessment (**14769/R01**) and will be detailed within a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

Habitat Creation

3.5. The habitats to be lost to the proposed development include, buildings, hardstanding, introduced shrub and most of the trees, with the habitats that will be present at the site post-development comprising urban-developed land (comprising buildings, roads and hardstanding), neutral/wildflower grassland, modified/amenity grassland, introduced shrub and urban trees (see **Plan 14769/P03**).

3.6. The new development within the including new buildings, hardstanding footpaths, and other pedestrianised areas, with comprise urban built form and as such no condition assessment is required.

3.7. New areas of neutral/wildflower grassland will be created and will be sown with a wildflower and grass species mix to maximise species diversity. This habitat will be managed for biodiversity and will achieve a maximum of 'poor condition' with a uniform sward height.

3.8. Areas of modified grassland will also be created within the open spaces and in conjunction with the buildings and pathways. This grassland will be managed for amenity purposes and to 'moderate condition' with a uniform sward height.

3.9. A number of the new buildings at the site will be built to include planted roof gardens for the benefit of biodiversity. These features have been assessed in the BNG metric as 'other green roofs' and would achieve at least 'poor condition' which is the highest level which can be achieved in the Biodiversity metric technical supplement (Panks et al, 2022).

3.10. New ornamental planting (introduced shrub) will be created in association with the buildings and pathways. This habitat will comprise a diverse mix of ornamental and native species for the benefit of biodiversity and will achieve 'poor condition' which is the highest level which can be achieved in the Biodiversity metric technical supplement (Panks *et al*, 2022).

3.11. Extensive urban tree planting will occur across the site replacing any trees lost and achieving a gain in trees post-development. These trees will comprise a mix of native and ornamental species of known value to wildlife. Post-development these trees will achieve at least 'poor condition' with at least 70% to be native species and with trees sensitively managed to encourage wildlife and minimise adverse management impacts.

Management

3.12. Management measures will be implemented at the site to ensure that the required habitat conditions are achieved, biodiversity is increased and opportunities for wildlife maximised. These measures will be detailed in a LEMP.

Other Biodiversity Enhancements

3.13. In addition to the above points, further measures are to be implemented at the site that will assist with increasing biodiversity, although they are not considered within the BNG metric which deals with only habitats.

3.14. Bat boxes are to be installed on the new buildings and will lead to an increase in roosting provision post-development and could result in an increased abundance and diversity of bat species roosting at the site.

3.15. Bird boxes are also to be installed on the new buildings and will lead to an increase in nesting provision post-development and could result in an increased abundance and diversity of bird species nesting at the site.

BNG Score

3.16. Based on the above measures the following BNG score will be achieved:

- **+13.19% in Habitat Units.**

Section 4: Summary

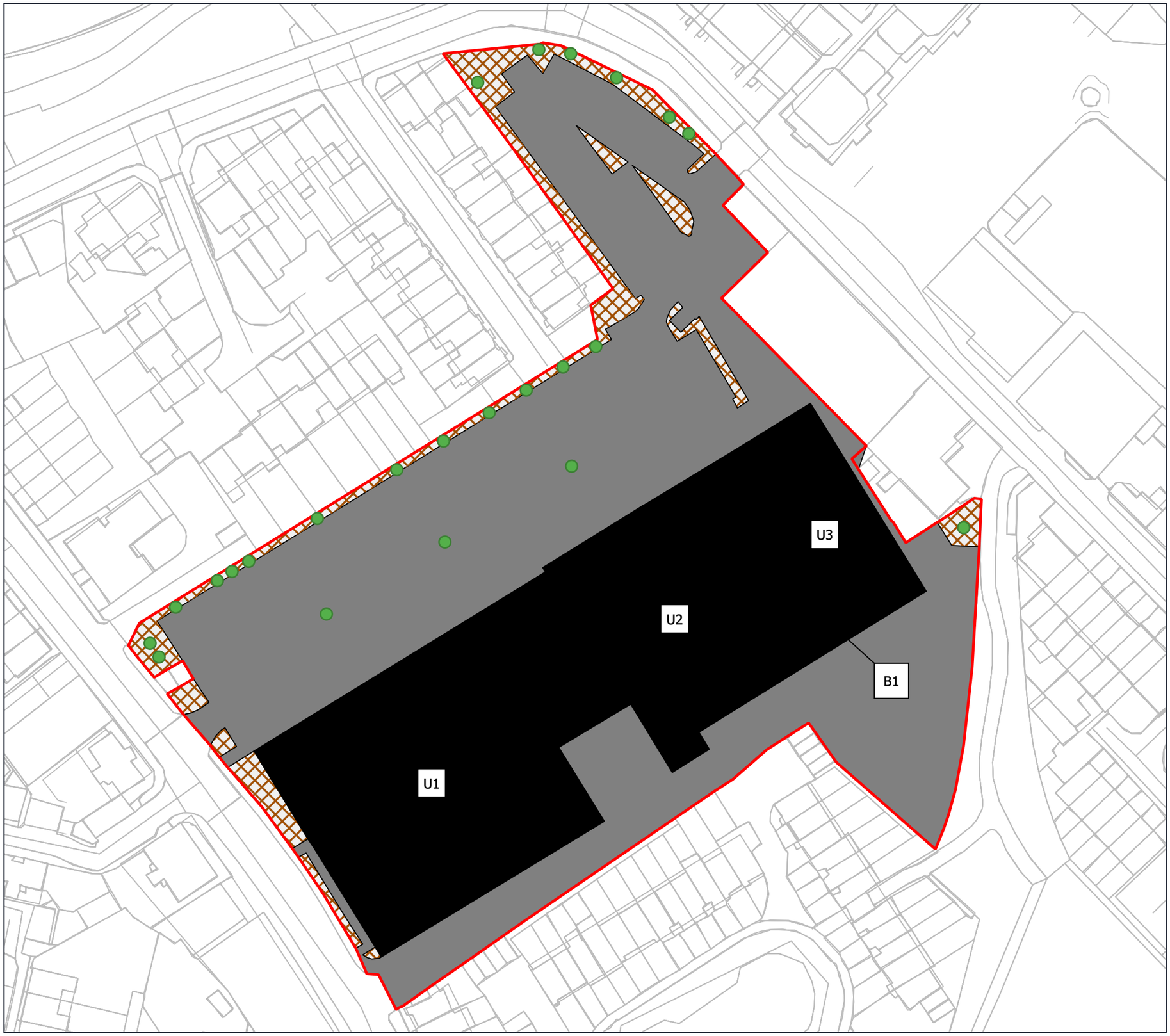
4.1. The layout for the site has followed the mitigation hierarchy, with impacts avoided through the retention, and enhancement of the majority of habitats of highest ecological importance, existing trees. The majority of the site where development is to take place is to occur on habitat of low ecological importance and biodiversity value, namely introduced shrub, buildings and hardstanding.

4.2. Post-development the provision of new areas of habitat will result in a net gain of **+13.19%** in Habitat Units. In addition to this, a significant gain in tree numbers will be achieved, further increasing biodiversity as well as opportunities for wildlife.

4.3. As such, it can be demonstrated that the proposals would deliver overall gains in biodiversity and the development would therefore be in conformity with relevant planning policy and legislation.

Plans

14769/P02 Habitat Features



Site Boundary

Habitats

Buildings

Hardstanding

Introduced Shrub

Trees

N

0 25 50 m

Project	Haven Banks Retail Park, Exeter
Drawing Title	Habitat Features
Scale	As Shown (Approximate)
Drawing No.	14769/P02
Date	June 2022
Checked	JS/RR

Tyler Grange

The Gallery, Kings Wharf, The Quay, Exeter, EX2 4AN
T: 01285 831 804 E: info@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk