

Land to the West and East of Hyde End Road

Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Prepared on behalf of

Bloor Homes and the University of Reading

Final Report

20 February 2026

31/33-2C

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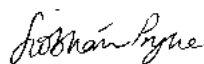
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Biodiversity Net Gain Report

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BIODIVERSITY GAIN VALIDATION STATEMENT

This Statement provides the minimum information required for Wokingham Borough Council to validate the planning application for the Proposals, as set out in Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended by The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024).

EPR hereby confirms that the Applicant believes that planning permission, if granted, would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition.

The on-site pre-development biodiversity value is taken to be the date that the Application is submitted. No activities resulting in a loss of on-site biodiversity value (degradation) have taken place between 30 January 2020 and this date.

A completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (published on the 12th February 2025) has been submitted with the Application as part of the Information for Biodiversity Net Gain Pack. This shows the calculations of the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on the date of application. The baseline on-site biodiversity value is calculated as follows:

- 24.38 Area Habitat units
- 4.10 Hedgerow units
- 1.83 Watercourse units

Plans, drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North, are included within this document (**Maps 1 and 2**) showing the on-site habitat existing on the date of application, including any irreplaceable habitat if present.

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Biodiversity Net Gain Report

1. INTRODUCTION

Scope

- 1.1 This Technical Appendix sets out the details of the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations completed for the Proposals, including:
- Assessment Methodology;
 - Summary of evidence underpinning Metric decisions;
 - Assumptions and Limitations;
 - Headline Results;
 - Summary of proposed significant on-site habitat enhancements;
 - Overview of proposed arrangements for BNG delivery and monitoring.
- 1.2 It is equivalent to the 'BNG Design Stage Report' recommended by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) in their Biodiversity Net Gain Report & Audit Templates guidance document (CIEEM, 2021a).

Description of Site

- 1.3 The Site itself largely comprises arable land, scrub, derelict farm buildings, ditches and grassland, with boundary hedgerows and woodland. The Site is managed as active arable land with crops being grown and periodically grazed by sheep. Additionally, the modified grassland area is periodically grazed by cows.

Description of Development

- 1.4 The Proposals are described in the application documents as follows:

The proposed development includes the demolition of existing buildings within the Site and clearance of the Site for the construction of a 184-unit development and supporting infrastructure, as well as green space.

Legislation and Policy Context

- 1.5 A minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity, as measured by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, 2024a,) is now a condition of most types of planning permission in England under the Environment Act 2021 and associated secondary legislation.
- 1.6 Guidance has clarified that where present on-site, the 10% gain requirement applies individually to three categories of habitat: 'Area Habitats', 'Hedgerows', and 'Watercourses'. This is measured in 'units' which can be delivered on-site, off-site, or a combination of both, and must be secured for a minimum of 30 years.

- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DLUHC, 2023) requires local plans to “identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains in biodiversity” and enhance the natural and local environment by “minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity”.

Guidance

- 1.8 The following guidance documents have informed the BNG assessment and overall approach:

- Defra’s Biodiversity Gain Guidance, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (DEFRA, 2024);
- The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023);
- Biodiversity Net Gain. Good Practice Principles for Development – A Practical Guide (Baker et al., 2019);
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates (CIEEM, 2021a);
- Good Practice Requirements for Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain (On- and Off-Site) (CIEEM, 2021b); and
- BS8683:2021 Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain – Specification (BSI, 2021).

2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Metric Version and Assessors

- 2.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric and Condition Assessments published 12th February 2024 were used for this BNG assessment.
- 2.2 The calculations were carried out by Siobhan Pryke, Senior Ecologist and reviewed by Alison Hogan, Managing Director, both experienced ecologists and BNG practitioners.

Baseline Surveys

On-Site

- 2.3 Baseline habitat and condition assessment surveys were carried out by EPR botanist Hannah Corrigan, Senior Ecologist. The survey dates are as follows:

Table 2.1: Baseline habitat survey dates

Date	Survey Type	Surveyor(s)
19/07/2024	Habitat survey and condition assessment	Hannah Corrigan

- 2.4 Habitat mapping was undertaken according to the UK Habitat Classification v.2.0 methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023) and translated into BNG habitat categories where necessary.
- 2.5 Following the surveys, each area or length of habitat was mapped in ESRI ArcGIS software (Map 1).
- 2.6 Detailed habitat descriptions, including species lists where appropriate, are set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EPR, 2026).

Post-Development Plans

On-Site

- 2.7 The following plans produced by other technical consultants, submitted for approval with the Application, were used as the basis for the post-development calculations. These plans were imported into ArcGIS software and each line or polygon was assigned a BNG habitat type and target condition (Map 2):
 - Landscape Strategy Plan (12332-FPCR-XX-XX-DR-L-003-P12-Landscapestrategy).
 - Open Space Plan (12332-FPCR-XX-XX-DR-L-004-P06-OpenSpacePlan)

Metric Inputs

- 2.8 As set out in the Statutory Metric User Guide (DEFRA, 2024), one of the key principles of the Biodiversity Metric is that “this biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice”.

- 2.9 When completing a Metric, the assessor must therefore make a number of decisions based on available evidence (such as ecological survey data), professional judgement, and ecological expertise. The User Guide (DEFRA, 2024) also states that “Evidence for metric decisions should be provided and signposted within the ‘User Comments’ column of the biodiversity metric tool”.
- 2.10 To ensure that the Metric Calculation Tool remains as user-friendly as possible, the following paragraphs expand upon the User Comments to provide more detail on the decisions behind the data entered into the Metric, where this is considered necessary and proportionate.

On-Site Habitat Type and Condition

Target Conditions

- 2.11 Target habitat conditions have been predicted with reference to the relevant Condition Assessment sheet (DEFRA, 2024b), with full details and justifications set out in the separate spreadsheet submitted with the Application.
- 2.12 The Target Conditions are considered to be realistic and achievable, and will be delivered and maintained through the implementation of the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to be submitted alongside the Biodiversity Gain Plan to discharge the general biodiversity gain planning condition, should consent be granted. A draft version of the HMMP has been submitted with this Application.

Strategic Significance

- 2.13 West Berkshire is currently in the process of producing a Local Nature Strategy (LNS), so in the absence of this document, the strategic significance was determined using the Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan (2012-2024).

Assumptions and Limitations

- 2.14 The post-development plan was drawn from a landscape strategy and not a detailed landscape plan. However, as the seed mix was specified for each grassland type, this has been accounted for within the metric.

General Limitations of Metrics

- 2.15 As acknowledged in the User Guide (DEFRA, 2024), the Statutory Biodiversity Metric includes several inherent limitations. Extracts are provided below:

The use of this biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirements. This includes consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands.” (Principle 2).

“This biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice.” (Principle 4)

This biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance.” (Principle 6)

- 2.16 In relation to Principle 2, protected and valued species are considered in detail as part of the EclA. This also includes avoiding and mitigating impacts and promoting enhancements such as the provision of wildlife boxes, the latter of which should also be taken into account when assessing the overall BNG that can be delivered by the Proposals.

3. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Introduction

- 3.1 The following should be read with reference to **Maps 1** and **2** and the completed Metric Calculation Tool (particularly the Assessor Comments column) and Condition Assessment spreadsheets submitted separately with the Application.

Description of Baseline

- 3.2 The total number of on-site baseline units is calculated as follows:
- Area Habitats: 24.38 units
 - Hedgerows: 4.10 unit
 - Watercourses: 1.83 units
- 3.3 The Site is predominantly cropland fields, with a grazed grassland field by cows and sheep. There are small areas of mixed scrub and Bramble scrub present within the Site. There is a dry pond present within the western parcel.

The BNG Hierarchy

- 3.4 The Proposals were designed with ecological input from an early stage and due consideration has been given to the BNG Hierarchy throughout the masterplanning process.
- 3.5 The BNG Hierarchy, as set out in Article 37A of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) requires developers to take the following steps in relation to BNG:
- Avoidance of adverse effects to on-site habitats of 'Medium' distinctiveness and above;
 - Insofar as they cannot be avoided, mitigating those effects;
 - Insofar as they cannot be mitigated; compensating for those effects by prioritising in order, where possible:
 - 1) Enhancement of existing on-site habitats;
 - 2) Creation of new on-site habitats;
 - 3) Allocation of registered off-site gains; and finally
 - 4) Purchase of national off-site biodiversity credits.

3.6 **Table 3.1** sets out a summary of how the BNG Hierarchy has been applied by the Proposals.

Table 3.1: Application of the BNG Hierarchy

Action	Evidence of application
Impact Avoidance:	Retained hedgerows and treelines. Retained pond within the Site. Retained all ditches on the Site. Retention of all veteran trees on Site.
Mitigation:	Reduced loss of scrub present within the Site.
Compensation:	
Habitat creation (on-site)	Native tree and scrub planting, creation of SUDs, and creation of other neutral grassland.

Headline Results

3.7 As set out in the Metric Calculation Tool submitted with the Application, the Proposals are predicted to deliver the following net gains, with all Trading Rules met:

- 2.93 area habitat units, or 12.02%;
- 2.44 hedgerow units, or 59.53%; and
- 0.26 watercourse units, or 13.95%

Irreplaceable Habitats

3.8 There are nine veteran trees within the Site, which are all being retained as part of the development. Two of these are standalone trees, and seven form part of hedgerows or treelines within the Site. All veteran trees will be protected during the development.

On-Site Proposals to Deliver Net Gain

Significant on-site enhancements

- 3.9 A total of 372 trees will be planted throughout the development. A mixture of grassland seeds, including flowering lawn mixture, long-season meadow mixture and wetland meadow mixture, will be planted to increase the biodiversity value of the grassland created within the Site.
- 3.10 Mixed scrub will be created and retained within the Site.
- 3.11 Treelines and ditches will be enhanced from poor to moderate condition.

4. PROPOSALS FOR DELIVERY AND MONITORING

Delivery

On-Site

- 4.1 A draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will set out the proposed details of how the target habitat types and conditions required to achieve the BNG results reported in **Section 3** will be achieved. This will be through a combination of habitat retention, creation and enhancement measures, followed by ongoing management for a minimum period of 30 years for the 'significant' on-site enhancements described in **Section 3**.
- 4.2 Should planning consent be granted, the final version of the HMMP will be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council alongside a Biodiversity Gain Plan to discharge the biodiversity gain planning condition. The mechanism for securing the delivery of significant on-site enhancements is to be agreed with Wokingham Borough Council, but could take the form of a planning condition, planning obligation or conservation covenant.

Monitoring

On-Site

- 4.3 The successful establishment of newly created habitats and enhanced habitats and progress of all habitats towards their post-development Target Conditions will need to be regularly monitored to ensure that the predicted BNG will be realised on the ground. The HMMP will set out details of the proposed monitoring actions and frequency.

Conclusion

- 4.4 This Report has set out the methodology and results of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculations completed for the Proposals, which predict a net gain in 2.93 habitat units (12.02%), 2.44 hedgerow units (59.53%) and 0.26 watercourse units (13.95%).
- 4.5 Net gains will be delivered on-site through a combination of on-site habitat creation and enhancement.
- 4.6 Should planning consent be granted, full details of the arrangements for the delivery of a minimum 10% BNG will be set out in a Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for approval.
- 4.7 It is therefore concluded that the Proposals as envisaged would comply with the statutory minimum requirements for 10% biodiversity net gain as a condition of planning permission in England under the Environment Act 2021 and Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), as well as with the NPPF and local planning policy.

5. REFERENCES

- The British Standards Institution (BSI) (2021). *BS 8683:2021 Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain – Specification*. British Standards Limited, 2021.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2021). *Biodiversity Net Gain Report & Audit Templates. Version 1 July 2021*. CIEEM, Winchester.
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- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*.
- UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*. Available at <http://ukhab.org>

Maps

MAPS

Map 1 On-site BNG Baseline

Map 2 On-site BNG Post-Development



MAP 1 On-Site Habitat Baseline

- KEY
- Site boundary
 - Veteran tree
 - Small tree
 - Native hedgerow with trees
 - Ecologically valuable line of trees
 - Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch
 - Native hedgerow
 - Ditches
 - Cereal crops
 - Modified grassland
 - Other neutral grassland
 - Bramble scrub
 - Mixed scrub
 - Ponds (non-priority habitat)
 - Developed land; sealed surface

SCALE: 1:2,000 at A3

0 20 40 60 80 100 Metres



CLIENT: Bloor Homes Ltd

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MAP 2 On-Site Post Development Habitats

- KEY
- Site boundary
- Retained
- Veteran tree
 - Small tree
 - Native hedgerow with trees
 - Ecologically valuable line of trees
 - Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch
 - Native hedgerow
 - Ditches
 - Developed land; sealed surface
 - Mixed scrub
 - Ponds (non-priority habitat)
- Retained & Enhanced
- Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch
 - Ditches
- Created
- Urban trees
 - Native hedgerow
 - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
 - Bioswale
 - Developed land; sealed surface
 - Mixed scrub
 - Modified grassland
 - Other neutral grassland
 - Sustainable urban drainage feature
 - Vegetated garden

SCALE: 1:2,000 at A3

0 20 40 60 80 100 Metres



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