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Biodiversity Net Gain Plan in support of the development proposals at 6 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 6TA.

On behalf of: Shashi Kanth

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Date: 17/07/2025

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Introduction

This biodiversity net gain statement follows the full planning application at 6 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 6TA for the full 2-storey side extension and works to the existing building.

Development proposals:

- 2-storey side and change to front facade.

Does Biodiversity Net Gain Apply to this application?

Biodiversity Net gain is a requirement set out in Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) that requires any development that would impact the biodiversity value of a site to provide a 10% uplift in biodiversity. A site impacts biodiversity if it reduces the value of any onsite habitat.

The exemptions to this requirement are set out in the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (exemptions) Regulations 2024 and are as follows;

De minimis exemption

- 1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which meets the first and second conditions.
- 2) The first condition is that the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat.
- 3) The second condition is that the development impacts—
 - (a) less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value(3) greater than zero; and
 - (b) less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.
- 4) For the purposes of this regulation—
 - (a) “priority habitat” means a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006(4);
 - (b) a habitat is impacted where the habitat is lost or degraded such that there is a decrease in the biodiversity value of that habitat;
 - (c) “linear habitat” means the types of hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric

5) (which are measured by length (expressed in kilometres) rather than area).

Householder applications

- 1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which is the subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

High Speed Railway Transport Network

- 1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high speed railway transport network comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in section 1(2) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013(6).
- 2) In this regulation “transport network” and “high speed railway transport network” have the same meaning as in the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.

Biodiversity gain site

- 1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the biodiversity gain planning condition which applies in relation to another development.
- 2) In determining whether a development is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose specified in paragraph (1), no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee.

Self-build and custom build applications

- 1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which—
 - a) consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
 - b) is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
 - c) consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding. (2) In this regulation “self-build or custom housebuilding” has the same meaning as in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015(7).

Due to this application not meeting the requirements to fall under any of the above exemptions, Planning Direct has been instructed to produce this statement on behalf of Shashi Kanth.

The statement should be read in conjunction with the following documentation:

- AIA Report,
- BNG Small Site Metric,
- BNG Landscape Plan.

Competency

This is a statement of competency for the creation of this report and the use and completion of the BNG metric.

I have worked for Planning Direct for 18 months. I have exclusively worked on BNG Small Sites Metric work since last April (24). So, given the inception time of the small site requirement, I have as much experience as anyone else on this. I conduct all our BNG surveys, produce the plans, produce Habitation Management Plans and liaise with Lisa, our Landscape Designer, where appropriate I also assist with Arboricultural Impact Surveys.

Methodology

The Small Sites Biodiversity Metric 4.0 was used to calculate the pre- and post-development biodiversity values of the proposed development.

This was completed following the guidance within DEFRA's small sites metric user guide.

The information entered into the Small Sites Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculator comprised:

- Broad Habitat;
- Habitat Type (used to determine Distinctiveness);
- Area (sq.m) OR Length (km); and
- Strategic Significance (whether the location is within the local plan (e.g. within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area) or not).

The metric is divided into three sections: area-based habitats, hedgerow linear habitats, and watercourse linear features. The overall biodiversity score of the project is taken as the lowest-scoring change among these different habitat groups.

There are no watercourse linear features present on the site, so there will be no projected impact on watercourse units. For this reason, watercourses have not been involved in the BNG calculations for this development.

Pre-development biodiversity on-site

Habitat areas present

Developed land; sealed surface - 120 sqm - Total habitat units onsite 0.00 - Existing Building - Full 120 sqm to be retained.

Vegetated garden - 370 sqm - Total habitat units onsite 0.07 - Garden area (front and back) - 271.42 sqm to be retained.

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface - 130 sqm - Total habitat units 0.00 - Drive way (pebbles). 0 sqm to be retained.

2 existing “small” apple trees.

1 existing “medium” cherry tree. - Not to be retained.

Hedgerows and Tree lines present

Native hedgerow - 10.94m - Total units onsite 0.0438 - Hedgerow 1 - 10.94m to be retained.

Native hedgerow - 2.78m - Total units onsite 0.0111 - Hedgerow 2 - 2.78m to be retained.

Native hedgerow - 35.53m - Total units onsite 0.1421 - Hedgerow 3 - 30.53m to be retained - 5m to be enhanced.

Native hedgerow - 33.49m - Total units onsite 0.1340 - Hedgerow 4 - 33.49m to be retained.

Native hedgerow - 18.29m - Total units onsite 0.0732 - Hedgerow 5 - 18.29m to be enhanced.

Baseline Units	Habitat units	0.2986
	Hedgerow units	0.4041
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline

Baseline units taken from small site metric.



Developed land; sealed surface - Site photo taken on 15th July 2025



Vegetated Garden - Site photo taken on 15th July 2025.



Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface - Site photo taken on 15th of July 2025.



Cherry tree - Site photo taken on 15th of July 2025.



Apple tree - Site photo taken on the 15th of July 2025.

Post-development biodiversity proposals

Habitat area creation

Developed land; sealed surface - N/A - Other condition - 56.32 sqm - Total habitat units created onsite 0.0000 - Full extension works.

Sustainable drainage system - Moderate condition - 30.65 sqm - Total habitat units created onsite 0.0074 - Car Port.

Sustainable drainage system - Moderate condition - 141.61 sqm - Total habitat units created onsite 0.0341 - Grass Crete driveway replacing pebbles.

1 “small” individual Urban/rural trees - moderate condition. DBH Less than or equal to 30cm.

3 “medium” individual Urban/rural trees - moderate condition - DBH between 30cm and 60cm.

Sustainable drainage system

- Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.
- The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example, flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.
- Invasive non-native plant species and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area.
- Plant species are mostly native. If non-native species are present, they should not be detrimental to the habitat or native wildlife.

Small/medium individual urban/rural trees must pass 3 or 4 criteria.

- The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).
- There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their

age range and height.

- Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as the presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.

Hedgerows and Tree lines enhancement

Native hedgerow - condition enhancement type - 5m - To good condition - 0.0293 - Net improvement 0.0093.

Native hedgerow - condition enhancement type - 18.29m - To good condition - 0.1072 - Net improvement 0.0341.

Good condition - No more than 2 failures in total, and no more than 1 failure in functional group

Hedgerow favourable condition attributes					
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)		Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Criteria description	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types					
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).		
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).		
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).		
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).		
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and - Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.		
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.		

Hedgerow conditions assessment sheet 1.

D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA3) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .		
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).		
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only					
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient ⁸), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.		
E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.		

Hedgerow conditions assessment sheet 2.

Summary of post-development biodiversity proposals

Post-development Units	Habitat units	0.3324
	Hedgerow units	0.4475
	Watercourse units	0.0000

Post-development units taken from small site metric.

Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.0338	✓
	Hedgerow units	0.0434	✓
	Watercourse units	0.0000	✓

Total net unit change taken from small site metric.

Total net % change	Habitat units	11.30%	✓
	Hedgerow units	10.73%	✓
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate	✓

Total net % change taken from small site metric.

Trading Summary	
Broad Habitat Type - Medium Distinctiveness Habitats	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓
Medium and Low Distinctiveness Band	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓

Habitat trading assessment					
Broad habitat types	Distinctiveness band	Baseline units	Onsite provision	Net change	Trading satisfied?
Cropland	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Grassland	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Heathland and shrub	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Intertidal hard structures	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Intertidal sediment	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Lakes	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Sparsely vegetated land	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Urban	Low	0.0740	0.0958	0.0218	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Woodland and forest	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Coastal saltmarsh	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	N/A
Individual trees	Low	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	-
	Medium	0.2246	0.2366	0.0120	Yes ✓
Distinctiveness band		Baseline units	Onsite provision	Net change	Trading satisfied?
Medium distinctiveness		0.2246	0.237	0.0120	Yes ✓
Low distinctiveness		0.0740	0.096	0.0218	Yes ✓
Surplus area habitat biodiversity units after offsetting low distinctiveness units		0.0338			Yes ✓

Habitat trading summary taken from small site metric.

1e . Trading Summary

Distinctiveness and Habitat Type	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓
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1f . Habitat trading assessment

Broad habitat type	Distinctiveness	Habitat type	Baseline units	Onsite provision	Net change	Trading satisfied?
Hedgerows and Lines of trees	Medium	Species-rich native hedgerow	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	Yes ✓
		Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		Native hedgerow with trees	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		Ecologically valuable line of trees	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		Sum	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
	Low	Native hedgerow	0.4041	0.4475	0.0434	Yes ✓
		Line of trees	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		Line of trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		Sum	0.4041	0.4475	0.0434	
	Very low	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	Yes ✓

Surplus medium distinctiveness units to offset low and very low distinctiveness units	0.0000
Cumulative surplus of units after offsetting low distinctiveness units	0.0434
Cumulative surplus of units after offsetting very low distinctiveness units	0.0434

Hedgerow and tree line trading assessment.

Other biodiversity enhancements

1 x Bird box to be placed and illustrated on the BNG plan.

- House Sparrow Nest Box
- Entrance hole 32 mm diameter
- Base 150 mm x 120 mm
- Each Side 200 mm x 175 mm
- Front 175 mm x 150 mm
- Back 300 mm x 150 mm
- Roof 300 mm x 150 mm
- Design Specifications taken from the BTO organisation - cutting plan for the House Sparrow nest box.

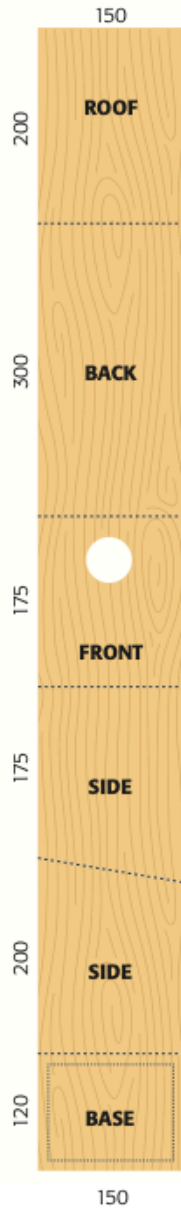
1 x Bat box to be placed and illustrated on the BNG plan.

- Bats do not like draughts; the entrance slit should be no more than 15-20mm wide.
- Screwed firmly onto the tree
- Width: 170 mm
- Height: 315 mm
- Length: 75mm
- Material: Wood.

To monitor and manage both of these proposed boxes, checks will be conducted every spring and autumn to ensure there is no damage and to verify whether the boxes are housing birds or bats. If damages are present, they will be noted and fixed.

HOUSE SPARROW NEST BOX – CUTTING PLAN

Plank size c. 150 x 1170 mm
All measurements are in mm



WEATHERPROOFING

Weatherproof the roof with water-based preservative and ensure it overlaps the front of the box to stop rain reaching the entrance hole.

32 mm diameter entrance hole for House Sparrow



ROOF JOINT

To minimise the risk of rain entering the back of the box it is worth cutting a groove into the back plate to accommodate the back edge of the roof.

OPENING ROOF

Fit a rubber hinge so that the roof can be lifted easily for cleaning and nest monitoring. Find out more about the BTO Nest Record Scheme on our website www.bto.org

ALTERNATIVE DESIGN

An alternative to the traditional round entrance hole is a simple triangular opening on the side of the box. Overhang the roof if you adopt this approach.

Get more information from our book 'Nestboxes: your complete guide'. Available from www.bto.org



House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Clutch size: 4–5 eggs

Incubation: c.12 days

Chicks fledge at: 14–15 days

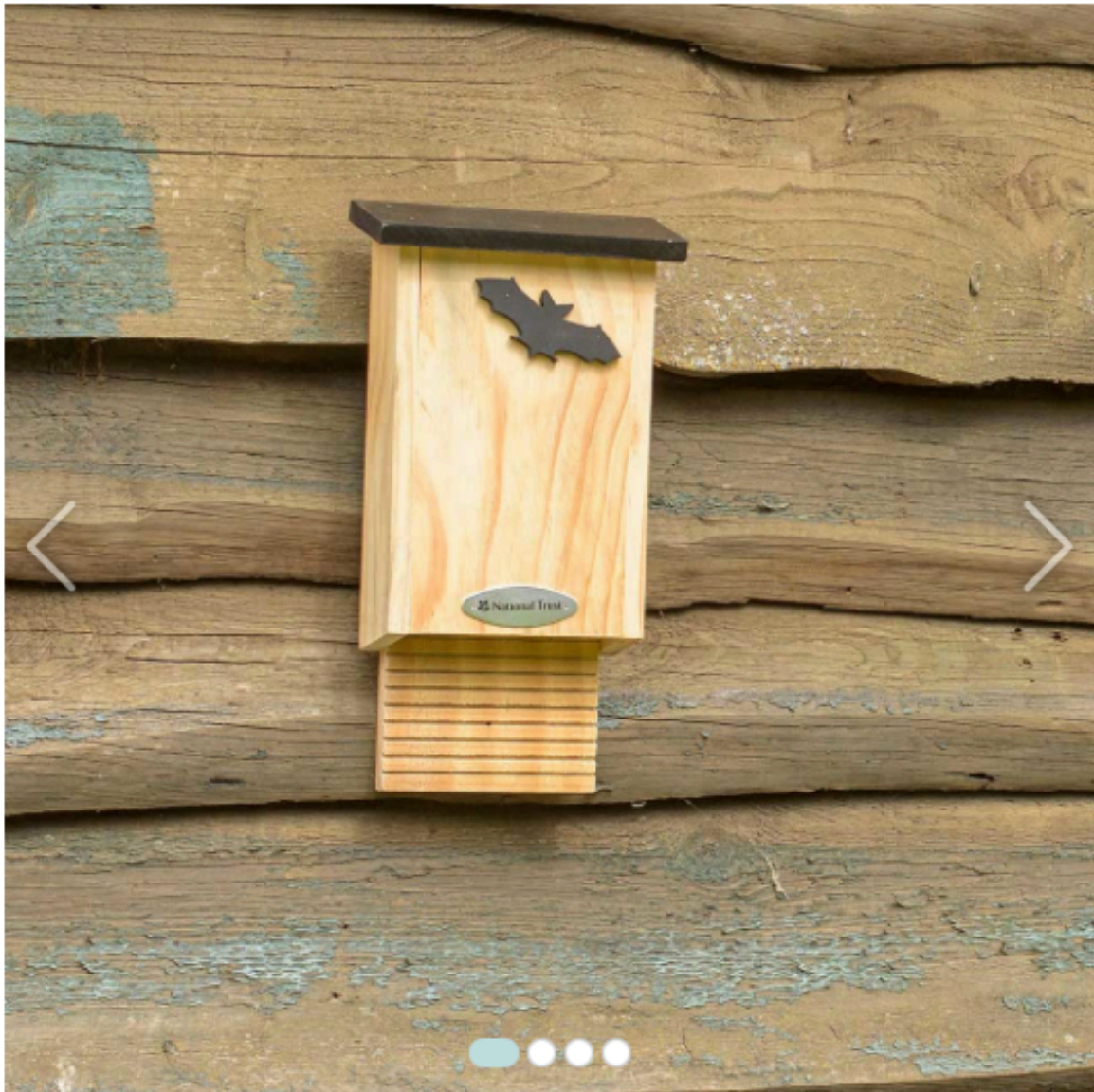
Broods: 2–3 per year

Seasonality of nests with eggs (E) and young (Y), derived from Nest Record Scheme data.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E												
Y												

Cover photograph: John Harding / BTO;
design artwork: Nigel Hawtin

House Sparrow Nest Box taken from BTO Website.



Natural Trust Glamis Bat Box.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the BNG target of 10% is met through the proposals above. The addition of 3 new medium trees and 1 small tree takes the original habitat units of 2986 to 0.3324, which is a 11.30% change. The hedgerow units through the proposed changes increase from 0.4041 to 0.4475, representing a 10.73% gain.

Site Name		6 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 6TA.	
Sheet Name		Headline Results	
Headline Results			
Headline		BNG Targets Met ✓	
Trading Rules		Trading Rules Satisfied ✓	
Next steps		Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric ⚠	
Baseline Units	Habitat units	0.2986	
	Hedgerow units	0.4041	
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline	
Post-development Units	Habitat units	0.3324	
	Hedgerow units	0.4475	
	Watercourse units	0.0000	
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.0338	✓
	Hedgerow units	0.0434	✓
	Watercourse units	0.0000	✓
Total net % change	Habitat units	11.30%	✓
	Hedgerow units	10.73%	✓
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate	✓

Headline results taken from small site metric.
