

# **Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment**

Land at Glenelm and 160 Anyards Road, Surrey

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#### LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species maybe recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

# 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The site lies to the in the north of Cobham, south of Portsmouth Road and the A307. The site (TQ 1077 6063) includes multiple buildings and hardstanding car parks. The site is surrounded by residential properties, with units of woodland and arable fields in the wider landscape. This report provides an initial BNG assessment for the proposed development site.
- 1.2 The Biodiversity Metric 4 is used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial habitats within the application area. This metric underpins the Environment Bill's provisions for mandatory biodiversity net-gain in England and defines 'measurable' net gains.
- 1.3 The extent of the site is shown in Figure 1 below. Proposals for an Outline Application for the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of 26 residential dwellings, with layout, scale, access and appearance for consideration. The proposals are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 1: Site red line boundary



Figure 2: Draft Landscape Masterplan (Allen Pyke, October 2023)

1.4 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) principles are aimed to support both the aspired green infrastructural proposals set to define the created landscape, and support biodiversity and habitat enhancement. BNG principles are set within the Environment Bill (2021).

# 2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 In order to identify areas for ecological enhancements, a PEA (Preliminary ecological appraisal) and a condition assessment (an assessment of the quality of the habitats present within the redline boundary) was undertaken on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 by the Ecology Partnership.
- 2.2 The creation of areas which would support potential net-gain areas are based on the following
  - Identification / classification of the on-site baseline habitats;
  - Identification of habitats which are of high ecological value;
  - Provision of habitat mapping;
  - Identification of potential for ecological connectivity;

- Identification of areas which support landscape development;
- Linking biodiversity net gain areas, landscape features in order to identified opportunity areas which support the Nature Recovery Network aspirations;
- Recommendations for species rich, native planting.

### 3.0 DEFRA Metric

- 3.1 The Biodiversity Metric 4 is used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial habitats within the application area. This metric underpins the Environment Bill's provisions for mandatory biodiversity net-gain in England.
- 3.2 The Biodiversity Metric uses habitat as a proxy for wider biodiversity with different habitat types scoring different values according to their relative biodiversity value and dependent on the condition and location of the habitat, to calculate 'biodiversity units'.
- 3.3 The site has been assessed in terms of the condition assessment of the baseline during 2023, following the standard metric guidelines. For example, all grassland habitats were reviewed in terms of species composition per m<sup>2</sup> and as a whole (across the whole of the site).
- 3.4 The post development areas taken from a number of broad habitat types from the emerging masterplan document. As such the exact number for the BNG will alter throughout the evolution of the master plan.
- 3.5 It must be noted that the garden habitats had been cleared of shrubs prior to the site survey, at some stage in 2023. The habitats prior to clearance have been estimated. However, this area is garden habitat and therefore the condition is a 'default' condition in the metric.

# Site Specific DEFRA Metric Calculations

3.6 The habitats currently present on site have been divided into a number of habitat types.

These are shown in Table 1 and figure 3, below.

Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition
Developed land; sealed surface	0.29	This habitat type was used to describe hardstanding & buildings that dominated the site.
		Considered 'N/A-Other' condition
Vegetated Garden	0.19	This habitat was used to describe the garden on site
		Default ' <b>Poor</b> ' condition
Total	0.48	

Table 1: On-site habitat breakdown – Pre-Development 0.46 ha



Figure 3: Existing site habitats

3.7 The habitats proposed – i.e., post development on site – have been estimated from the proposed layout (Allen Pyke Drawing no. 3139-APA-ZZ-00-LA-L-1001).

3.8 The proposed layout and associated habitats are shown in Figure 2 below. The habitats shown in the post development plans are the habitats which have been included within the DEFRA metric.



Figure 4: Proposed post development habitats

3.9 The habitat types and areas from the proposal are shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Habitat Breakdown – Post Development 0.46 ha

Habitat type	Area (ha)	Condition
Developed land; sealed	0.3	This habitat includes the buildings and areas of
surface		hardstanding in the proposals.
		Considered 'N/A-Other' condition.
Vegetated Garden	0.1	Used to describe the new gardens and areas of grassland
		on the site
		Due to management being up to occupants of new
		housing, a condition assessment is not applicable
		Considered ' <b>Poor</b> ' condition

Other neutral grassland	0.02	Used to describe areas of species-rich flowering lawn
		areas
		Considered 'Poor' condition
Introduced shrub	0.06	Used to describe areas of non-native ornamental
		herbaceous and shrub planting.
		Default ' <b>Poor</b> ' condition
Urban Tree	0.08	Used to describe the planting of 19 small trees in 'poor'
	This area is not used in the	condition.
	total area as it is	
	representative of the	Considered ' <b>Poor</b> ' condition
	ecological value of the trees	
Total	0.48	

- 3.10 The proposed development is removing the existing vegetated garden and hardstanding habitat on site and replacing it with new residential dwellings with larger areas of vegetated garden, shrub, flowering lawns, and hardstanding. Urban trees are to be planted around the site.
- 3.11 The headline results are shown in Figure 3 below.

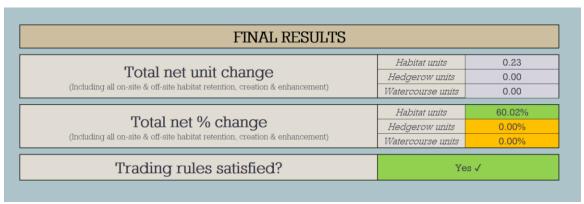


Figure 3: Headline results

- 3.12 Initial calculations indicate that a +60.02% net gain would result from the current agreed site layout.
- 3.13 It should be noted the biodiversity units calculated for the site post-development do not take into consideration enhancement features added such as log piles, bird nesting boxes or bat boxes/tubes, all of which should be installed across the site. It is therefore likely the net biodiversity gain would be higher as a result of these additional measures.

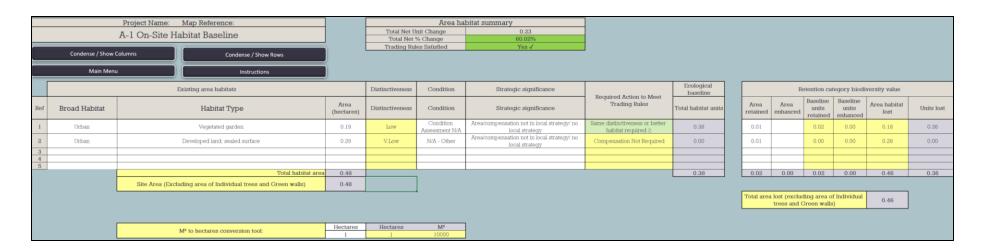
# 5.0 Enhancements

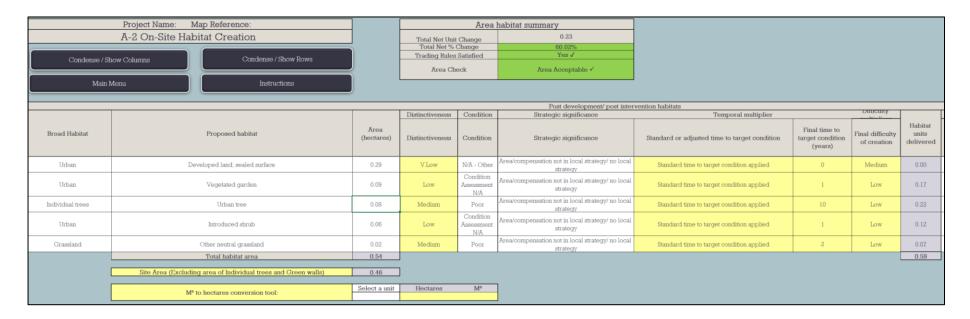
- 5.1 Recommended enhancements have been outlined within the preliminary ecological appraisal (The Ecology Partnership, 2023). These include:
  - Bird boxes hung on mature trees around the site
  - Bat boxes on mature trees around the site
  - Bee bricks integrated within new buildings
  - The use of hedgehog highways and hedgehog tunnels.

### 6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The baseline condition of habitats on site is considered to be low, given the dominance of low value vegetated garden and hardstanding.
- 6.2 The current proposals are for the existing hardstanding and vegetated garden area on site to be replaced by residential homes with associated access, parking, and vegetated gardens.
- 6.3 Under the current proposals, the scheme would result in a 60.02% net gain. Essential to retaining a positive net gain is the planting of 19 urban trees around the site, which should be kept within any altered proposals.
- 6.4 Recommended additional enhancements for the scheme have been given within this report, which are not recognised within the Defra metric. These will ensure that the proposed scheme achieves an enhanced value for biodiversity post-development, creating opportunities for wildlife on site and within the wider area.

Land at Anyards Road, Cobham October 2023





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