Biodiversity Net Gain Report

For:	Thornton Planning Ltd
Site:	Sycamore House Farm, Plaistow Green Road, DE4 5GX
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Site Name:	Sycamore House Farm, Plaistow Green Road, DE4 5GX
Report:	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
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Whilst every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this report and its contents in view of potential ecological constraints to development or the likely presence or absence of species it must only be viewed as a snapshot in time and not be viewed as definitive. Due to external factors, such as seasonality, weather etc having the potential to affect survey results, no liability can be assumed for omissions or changes that may or may not occur after the date this report was produced.

1 Executive Summary

1.1 For the proposed development scheme for the site, a net gain of 11.71% for area habitat units is calculated and 18.57% gain for linear (hedgerow) units. Furthermore, the Trading Summaries have been satisfied by the proposed development scheme.

1.2 Achievement of the target is dependent upon meeting the required criteria and maintaining habitat conditions. Supplementary recommendations are detailed herein.

2 Introduction

2.1 In line with National Policy, developments (with some exceptions) are expected to achieve a minimum of 10% net gain in site biodiversity value.

2.2 Biodiversity Metric calculations were requested by the client to determine the extent of net loss, no net loss, or net gain for the development proposal. The calculations were required for submission as part of a planning application, in accordance with Local and National Planning Policies.

2.3 Biodiversity Metric calculations were therefore undertaken for baseline and post-development habitats for the development site, using the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool developed by DEFRA. This assessment evaluates the impact of current development proposals on existing biodiversity resources within the development site.

3 Baseline and Post Development Scheme

3.1 The UK HABS habitat classification map in Figure 1 summarises the habitats identified via field survey (August 2025).

3.2 Figure 2 presents the post-development habitat plan for the scheme's design.

3.3 Figure 3 presents the summary of the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculations.

3.4 Appendix One shows the final site plan for the development.

Figure 1 : UK HABS Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)



Figure 2 : UK HABS Habitat Classification Map (Post-development)



4 Methodology

4.1 The Environment Bill (2020) seeks to improve biodiversity through several means, including the introduction of a mandatory requirement for new developments to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain, which will be managed as such for a minimum of 30 years after the development has been completed (Environment Bank, 2021). Key parts of the Environment Bill which relate to biodiversity net gain and its delivery are Part 6 Nature and Biodiversity and the supporting Schedule 14, particularly sections 9(3), 13(2), 14(2) and 15.

4.2 Baseline habitats were surveyed, and their condition assessed during a site assessment within the growing season and based on the UK HABS Habitat Classification map (Figure 1).

4.3 The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric was used to calculate biodiversity units for baseline and post-development habitats for the development site, to determine if the proposed development will be likely to achieve net loss, no net loss, or net gain of biodiversity units.

- Individual habitat areas were rounded to four decimal places, with the minimum mappable unit being 0.0001 hectares. The canopy areas of Individual trees were calculated using the Urban Tree Helper tool included within the metric calculator. Linear habitat features such as hedgerows and ditches are measured in kilometres.

- Habitat condition indicates the quality of the habitat, either existing or to be achieved, based on the habitat condition assessments using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology.

- Habitats were assessed for their strategic significance at a landscape scale, using information from sources such as Local Plans, Biodiversity Action Plans, and Nature Recovery Areas to determine their significance within a specific landscape. If habitats weren't included within published reports, significance was determined by their contribution to habitat connectivity and green corridors.

4.4 Biodiversity unit calculations are based on the retention and / or enhancement of existing habitats within the proposed scheme design, as well as the creation of new habitats. Biodiversity units for linear habitat features are calculated separately within the metric.

5 Limitations

5.1 Habitat areas are rounded up or down to the nearest whole value, with a minimal mappable unit of 0.0001 hectares. However, the overall total of site habitat area and biodiversity units within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric are calculated and accurate to two decimal places.

5.2 Habitat areas used in the calculations are based on two-dimensional plans and so will not necessarily consider an increase in overall surface area as a result of slopes and banks.

6 Biodiversity Net Gain

6.1 The total baseline for biodiversity units for the site was calculated at 0.57 area habitat units. The site also recorded at the baseline 0.16 linear (hedgerow) units. No watercourse units were calculated at the baseline. No irreplaceable habitats are present at the baseline. Justifications for target conditions and strategic significance are outlined within the Metric comments.

6.2 The site post-development is calculated to have a total value of 0.64 area habitat units and 0.19 linear (hedgerow) units.

7 Overall Development

7.1 Overall, the proposals for the current development scheme will result in a net gain of 0.07 (2 d.p.) area units, representing an **11.71% net gain** for area habitats. A 0.03 (2 d.p.) net gain is expected for linear units, representing a **18.57% net gain** for linear units.

Figure 3: Summary of DEFRA Metric Calculations Results.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.07
	Hedgerow units	0.03
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	11.71%
	Hedgerow units	18.57%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?		Yes ✓

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.57	0.63	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.16	0.18	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

8 Summary and Recommendations

8.1 The proposed development scheme is predicted to achieve an **11.71% net gain** in area-based habitat units, and **18.57% net gain** for linear (hedgerow) units, if habitats reach target condition.

8.2 The Trading Summaries would be satisfied with the proposed development scheme.

8.3 Given the size and scope of the site, tree species should be selected for their ability to grow well alongside one another, with consideration to ultimate size and tolerance to site conditions. The use of whips is recommended for establishment.

8.4 A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be prepared to guide the establishment, maintenance, and ongoing monitoring of created and retained habitats, ensuring they progress towards and maintain their target conditions over time.

8.5 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations assume that all habitats will achieve their target conditions through effective long-term management. Management planning should take into account access, feasibility, and sustainability considerations.

8.6 An updated BNG report, including revised calculations, should be undertaken if there are changes to the development or landscaping proposals. The updated assessment should review habitat condition scores and consider any amendments within the final masterplan.

References

Environment Bank (2015) Biodiversity Impact Calculator – Guidance for Use. Environment Bank.

Environment Bank (2016) Biodiversity Accounting – An introduction. Environment Bank.

Environment Bank (2021) The Environment Bill and Biodiversity Net Gain Delivery. Available online at https://www.environmentbank.com/blog/the-environment-bill-and-biodiversity-net-gain-delivery-what-planning-authorities-need-to-know/) (February 2024)

DEFRA (2025) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide

UK HABS (2023) The UK Habitat Classification : Habitat Definitions. Version 2.0

Appendix One: Final site plan for the development

