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Penistone Blast Zone Land

Biodiversity Gain Assessment

May 2026

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Client	Bellway Homes Ltd (Yorkshire)
Project	Penistone Blast Zone Land, Biodiversity Gain Assessment Report
Version	FINAL
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	Name	**Position**	**Date**
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Issued to client	Katie Hawke	Ecologist	20 May 2026

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1 Introduction

Background to commission

1.1 In December 2025, Bellway Homes Ltd (Yorkshire) commissioned BSG Ecology to undertake a biodiversity gain assessment to support a planning application for a proposed residential development west of White Hart Road in Penistone, Barnsley (the Site).

1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) report (BSG Ecology, 2026) which sets out an ecological impact assessment and ecological mitigation associated with the proposed development.

Site description

1.3 The Site is located west of White Hart Road and is situated in the north of Penistone, Barnsley at central OS grid reference SE 24394 04455. The red line boundary and existing habitat types present are shown on Figure 1, Section 5.

1.4 The Site occupies an area of approximately 1.46 ha and supports one agricultural grassland field bounded by wooden fencing and a stone wall to the south. Residential land is located to the north-east and the adjacent land to the east is currently under development. Woodland is present immediately to the west and a grassland field is present to the south / south-west.

Project summary

1.5 The proposed development is for the construction of a 51-property residential development with associated public green spaces and infrastructure within the Site.

1.6 This report is written with reference to the Landscape Masterplan (Golby and Luck Landscape Architects, 2026), as presented in Appendix 1.

Purpose of this report

1.7 This report provides the details of the biodiversity gain assessment undertaken for the development; consideration is given to relevant legislative, planning policy and guidance documents to inform the presentation of the assessment. It is considered that sufficient certainty is given in the assessment to inform local planning authority decision making, on the principle that the biodiversity gain condition can be met, should planning permission be granted.

1.8 The biodiversity gain measures proposed are considered to be proportionate, reasonable, locally relevant, and practical to deliver on- and/or off-site.

1.9 BSG Ecology has relied upon the following information in the preparation of this assessment:

- The planning application ‘red line’ boundary of the Site as shown on the Landscape Masterplan (drawing number GLY0237 MP 01, dated May 2026) prepared by Golby and Luck Landscape Architects. See Appendix 1.
- The proposed development layout of the Site, as indicated on the Landscape Masterplan, cited above.
- Habitat survey data, presented in Figure 1, arising from the survey work undertaken on 21 January 2026 to inform the pre-development baseline habitat values (BSG Ecology, 2026). The date of this extended habitat survey is considered to be ‘the relevant date’.
- The published Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) (Defra, 2025a) and the associated User Guide (Defra, 2025b) applicable at the date of the biodiversity gain assessment, as referred to in the Methodology section of this report.
- Any other relevant information provided by the applicant or noted by BSG Ecology regarding activity on the Site where the development is to take place:

- ❖ specifically for a Site which does not have planning permission, any activity unrelated to any planning permission on or after 30 January 2020.

- Any other information provided by the applicant to inform the preparation of the projected biodiversity value of any habitat on and/or offsite.

2 Methodology

Field survey

2.1 An extended habitat survey of the Site was carried out on 21 January 2026 by Technical Director Dr Jim Fairclough and Ecologist Katie Hawke. Weather conditions during the survey were overcast, with a light breeze and light precipitation. The temperature during the survey was 8˚C.

2.2 During the survey, habitats were described and their condition assessed with reference to the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023) and SBM condition assessment methodology (Defra, 2025c). All habitats present within the Site were mapped and are shown on Figure 1.

2.3 The results of the surveys, including habitat descriptions and quadrat data, are set out in a separate report, Ecological Impact Assessment Report (BSG Ecology, 2026). Condition assessment results and the results of the metric are provided in separate Excel spreadsheets, Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

Biodiversity gain assessment

2.4 The biodiversity gain assessment identifies a measure of biodiversity change using the SBM (Defra, 2025a) and the associated User Guide (Defra, 2025b) and other relevant guidance, to calculate the biodiversity gain outcome of the development.

2.5 The SBM is a tool used to measure biodiversity losses and gains in relation to habitats. The SBM has been used to calculate the biodiversity value of the Site before the development and to provide a provisional value after the development. The purpose of the SBM values after the development is to provide sufficient comfort and certainty to the local planning authority in their consideration of the development that biodiversity gain can be achieved in principle for this development i.e. the biodiversity gain condition can be met. The final SBM outcome is subsequently calculated and included in the Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) which is to be submitted following planning consent to inform the discharge of the biodiversity gain condition.

2.6 The SBM enables determination of whether the development is likely to result in losses or gains in biodiversity unit terms. The SBM is used to numerically quantify the value of biodiversity at a site and can be used to inform an evidence base on the extent of required mitigation for a development, the extent of residual biodiversity impact and, if necessary, to identify the amount of required compensation. The Environment Act 2021 and associated secondary Regulations (SI2024 No's 44-50) together require biodiversity gain of 10% as a general condition of planning permission.

2.7 Reference is made to the following in this assessment:

- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 (SI No. 50).
- National planning policy guidance, as set out within the NPPF, in relation to securing measurable biodiversity gain through development proposals (MHCLG, 2025). See Appendix 4 for a summary of legislation and policy.
- Relevant local planning policy and supplementary planning guidance:
    - Barnsley Biodiversity Trust (2025). Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan.
    - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (2019a). Barnsley Local Plan – Adopted January 2019.
    - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (2019b). Barnsley Local Plan: Supplementary Planning Document – Biodiversity and Geodiversity. Adopted May 2019.
- The biodiversity net gain good practice principles (CIRIA, CIEEM & IEMA, 2019)

2.8 The interaction between the NPPF mitigation hierarchy and the biodiversity gain hierarchy is also considered.

2.9 The results of the metric and the habitat condition assessments are provided in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

2.10 The post-development calculation is based on the proposals as shown in the Landscape Masterplan (Golby and Luck Landscape Architects, 2026), taking into account any habitat retention, enhancement and creation. The habitats to be provided are based on a series of assumptions (described in Section 3), which have fed into the detailed landscape design. The post-development scenario for on-Site habitat enhancement and creation has been inputted into the calculator to determine the change in biodiversity units as a result of the proposed development of the Site.

Assumptions

2.11 Professional judgement has been applied to suggest realistic habitat types and areas / lengths of habitats that could potentially be created, what condition they would need to achieve and how they would (broadly) be maintained.

2.12 It is assumed that the drawings cited in this report, as supplied to BSG Ecology, can be relied upon to inform the post development outcome of the metric and therefore the biodiversity gain assessment.

Consideration of assumptions and limitations

2.13 The habitat survey was undertaken in January, outside the optimal season for botanical survey. However, given the composition of habitat types and range of species recorded in their vegetative state within the Site, areas of significant botanical interest are not considered likely to be present on Site. The species recorded on Site are not expected to have been significantly different if the survey had been undertaken during the optimum flowering survey period for botanical survey, and the timing of the survey is not considered to be a significant limitation.

3 Results

3.1 The baseline habitats within the Site are described in detail in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report (BSG Ecology, 2026). Figure 1 shows a plan of existing habitat types present within the Site. Figure 2 shows the proposed post-development habitat plan. The habitat condition assessment data and metric are provided in separate Excel spreadsheets, Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

3.2 The pre-application information requirements under The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) Regulations 2024 are provided below. The Biodiversity Gain Plan will be submitted to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council for approval following consent of the scheme.

Ecological data that are within the public domain can/cannot be shared with the relevant Local Records Centre (LRC)

3.3 It is understood that ecological data that are within the public domain can be shared with Sheffield Biological Records Centre (SBRC).

The relevant date for the pre-development

3.4 The proposed 'relevant date' for this development is deemed to be the habitat survey date: 21 January 2026.

3.5 It is considered that the baseline environment, as assessed within the metric, will not have changed between the relevant (survey) date and the application submission date due to the short timescale between the dates.

Irreplaceable habitats

3.6 No irreplaceable habitats have been recorded within or in proximity to the Site, therefore no irreplaceable habitats will be affected.

Strategic significance and Local Nature Recovery Strategies

3.7 South Yorkshire does not yet have a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. There is also no draft LNRS available.

3.8 The Local Plan Map (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2026) has been used to assign strategic significance in the absence of an LNRS. The map identifies Nature Improvement Areas, Greenspace and Biodiversity or Geological Interest Sites. The Site is not located within any of these areas. Therefore, low strategic significance ('*Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy*') has been applied to the baseline and post-development habitats.

Application of the biodiversity gain hierarchy

3.9 The biodiversity gain hierarchy has been adhered to within the proposed development by the following principles.

3.10 On-Site habitats:

- 1. Avoidance: There are no higher distinctiveness habitats on Site that have needed to be avoided; there are low and medium distinctiveness habitats on Site only. To allow the development to proceed, loss of the individual tree and modified grassland is necessary and could not be avoided.
- 2. Mitigation: Where applicable, protection measures will be implemented to ensure retained off-site woodland is protected during the works.
- 3. On-Site habitat enhancement: Existing habitats are to be lost to facilitate the development and therefore no enhancement opportunities are available on Site.

- 4. On-Site habitat creation: The planting of urban trees and a non-native and ornamental hedgerow, and the creation of modified grassland and other neutral grassland, has been incorporated into the scheme design and will contribute to the delivery of biodiversity gain.
- 5. Off-Site habitat creation/enhancement: At present, no suitable land for habitat creation or enhancement has been identified.
- 6. Biodiversity credits: In order to achieve a 10% gain to biodiversity and meet the habitat trading rules, off-Site biodiversity units or statutory biodiversity credits will need to be purchased from a local third-party habitat bank.

Interaction between biodiversity gain hierarchy and NPPF mitigation hierarchy

3.11 A separate Ecological Impact Assessment Report (BSG Ecology, 2026) assesses the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development and sets out avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures in line with the mitigation hierarchy.

Significant on-site enhancements

3.12 The on-Site creation of other neutral grassland and individual tree planting will create habitats with a distinctiveness score of four or more. These provisions are considered to be significant on-Site enhancements according to planning practice guidance (Defra, 2024).

3.13 Creation of very low or low distinctiveness habitats (i.e. developed land, vegetated garden, modified grassland, introduce shrub and non-native and ornamental hedgerow) is not considered to be a 'significant' on-Site enhancement.

Trading rules

3.14 Trading rules within the SBM are not satisfied via the provision of on-Site habitat units. There is a deficit in low distinctiveness habitat units due to the loss of modified grassland on-Site.

3.15 Habitat units: Offsite habitat units, of the same or higher band (i.e. habitat of low distinctiveness or higher), will need to be purchased from a third-party provider (such as the Environment Bank) to satisfy the trading rules and standards (Defra, 2025b).

3.16 Hedgerow units: There are no hedgerow units within the baseline and thus trading rules within the metric are satisfied.

Habitat management and monitoring plan

3.17 Details of habitat creation and long-term management and monitoring will be set out in a Construction Ecological Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP: Biodiversity) and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) produced prior to commencement.

3.18 The **CEMP: Biodiversity** will set out appropriate safeguard, protection, mitigation (including avoidance) and legal compliance measures to be followed, as well as details of proposed habitat creation.

3.19 The **HMMP** will set our appropriate aims and objectives for the management of created habitats within the Site, and in particular the main areas of habitat creation, seeking to maximise positive biodiversity outcomes for the habitats and species that will be affected (including beneficial enhancement) by the proposed development. These aims and habitat management prescriptions will seek to ensure resilience to the effects of climate change, as far as is reasonable.

The anticipated change in biodiversity value results using the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric

3.20 The pre-development habitats are presented on Figure 1 with condition assessments provided in a separate Excel spreadsheet in Appendix 2. The post-development habitats are presented on Figure 2, new habitats to be created or enhanced are summarised in Table 1 below.

3.21 Post-development habitats have been inferred though interpretation of the Landscape Masterplan (Golby and Luck Landscape Architects, 2026).

Table 1: Post-development habitat type and condition

Biodiversity Metric Habitat (and Distinctiveness)	Target condition	Notes and/or Justification
Developed land; sealed surface (very low)	N/A	No condition assessment applicable.
Vegetated garden (low)	Poor	Default of poor condition.
Introduce shrub (low)	N/A	No condition assessment applicable.
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (very low)	Poor	Default of poor condition.
Urban tree - small (medium)	Moderate	New trees have been considered as 'small' trees in line with the Metric User guidance (Defra, 2025b). Any trees within private gardens on the landscape plan have been excluded from the calculation in line with the guidance, as the longevity and health of such trees would be subject to third party influence and not guaranteed. The majority of newly planted trees will be native or cultivars and will be carefully maintained in the first five years to accelerate establishment. They are therefore expected to pass Criterion B (individual trees automatically pass), Criterion D (pruning) and Criterion F (>20% oversailing vegetation). Native species will pass Criterion A (native species); however, cultivars will fail this criterion. It is anticipated that trees are likely to fail Criterion E (deadwood, cavities, loose bark) and Criterion C (proportion of trees that are mature) after 30 years. Urban trees will therefore pass 3 or 4 criteria and reach the target for moderate condition.
Modified grassland (low)	Moderate	This includes grassland on road verges and narrow grassland strips adjacent to footpaths (grassland areas less than 3 m wide or less than 10 m^2 are considered unlikely to achieve other neutral grassland criteria; described below). These areas will be sown with a species rich lawn mix and are expected to support between 6 – 8 species per m^2 but will be mown regularly which would create a uniform sward height. Cover of scrub, bracken and invasive species will be controlled via management. It will therefore pass Criteria C, F & G. High levels of access may cause some physical damage, erosion or areas of bare ground. It is therefore possible that Criteria D & E will be failed. Therefore, the grassland areas are likely to fail up to three criteria and are anticipated to achieve moderate condition.
Other neutral grassland (medium)	Moderate	This includes species rich grassland to be created in the south-eastern corner of the Site and in the west of the Site, including a linear strip adjacent to the offsite woodland. These areas are not anticipated to be subject to high pedestrian traffic given their infrequent management, although they may be subject to occasional disturbances e.g. from dog-walkers. These areas are anticipated to achieve high species diversity through appropriate design, preparation and management, including a reduced mowing regime. Varied sward height is likely to be achieved as the grassland will be subject to a desirable mowing regime, and favourable management of the areas will

Biodiversity Metric Habitat (and Distinctiveness)	Target condition	Notes and/or Justification
		control cover of bare ground, bracken, and scrub. Due to the difficulty in controlling non-desirable vascular plant species in semi-urban areas, grassland may include species indicative of suboptimal condition. Appropriate seeding and management is anticipated to achieve >9 species per m^2 (which is associated with grassland of medium distinctiveness), however high diversity of species (10 or more species per m^2 excluding those indicative of suboptimal condition) is not likely achievable as some recreational pressure is anticipated (e.g. adjacent to footpaths). This fits the criteria to be grassland of medium distinctiveness in moderate condition.

3.22 The proposed habitat outcomes are considered to be achievable, can be legally secured and they are appropriate to the location and setting of the Site and the locally surrounding habitats.

3.23 Details of habitat creation and long-term management and monitoring will be set out in a CEMP: Biodiversity and HMMP to be produced prior to commencement.

Statutory Biodiversity Metric outcome

3.24 The SBM has been used to quantify biodiversity gain. With the incorporation of the above habitat creation and enhancement measures, 'habitat unit' scores have been calculated and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Headline SBM results

	Habitat units	Hedgerow units
On-site baseline	2.99	0.00
On-site post-intervention	1.81	0.04
On-site net % change	-39.47%	N/A
Total net unit change	-1.18	+0.04
Unit deficit	1.48	0.00

3.25 Bellway Homes Ltd has committed to deliver, where practicable, more than 10% biodiversity gains on all new sites submitted to planning from September 2025, including applications requiring a hybrid BNG solution (Bellway p.l.c., 2025). This Site will deliver this commitment through a combination of on-site and off-site habitat units.

3.26 To achieve the mandatory 10% net gain, a total of 1.48 offsite habitat units is required.

3.27 The full Excel spreadsheet is provided separately; the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool has not been devised for use in printed form.

Trading rules

3.28 Due to the loss of modified grassland on Site, 1.18 of the 1.48 habitat units required to achieve the mandatory 10% net gain will need to be of the same or higher band (i.e. habitat of low distinctiveness or higher) in order to meet the trading rules.

Consideration of Biodiversity Net Gain Good practice principles for development

3.29 On reference to CIRIA, CIEEM & IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain Good practice principles for development, the principles summarised in Table 3 were considered during the development design, completion of ecology related desk and field surveys and the biodiversity gain assessment.

Table 3: Biodiversity gain - the application of good practice principles for development

Number	Summary heading of principle	Rationale
Principle 1	Apply the mitigation hierarchy	A separate Ecological Impact Assessment Report (BSG Ecology, 2026) assesses the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development and sets out avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures in line with the mitigation hierarchy.
Principle 2	Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere	No irreplaceable habitats are present on-Site. Where possible, habitat losses will be offset through habitat creation on-Site. Otherwise, off-Site biodiversity units will be purchased to ensure that the metric trading rules are met for all habitats.
Principle 3	Be inclusive and equitable	Project liaison has been undertaken with the project team.
Principle 4	Address risks	The use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric embeds risks associated with difficulty, spatial multipliers and time to target condition. Any habitat creation or retention that may require special measures to ensure effective delivery of the habitats will be subject to procedures specified in a CEMP: Biodiversity and HMMP. It is considered that realistically achievable habitats have been targeted within the post-development plan.
Principle 5	Make a measurable net gain contribution	The form of 'measurement' has been to apply the Statutory Biodiversity Metric to provide biodiversity unit values as far as reasonably possible.
Principle 6	Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity	The habitat creation measures proposed are considered to be appropriate for the environment and setting and proportionate to the nature, extent and type of development.
Principle 7	Be additional	Where possible, lost habitats will be replaced by habitats of higher distinctiveness or higher condition. For example, other neutral grassland creation and individual tree planting has been included in the proposed development layout.
Principle 8	Create a net gain legacy	The legacy of the habitat enhancement has been considered by ensuring the habitats are suitable for the landscape and suitable for their context within the development, with consideration to potential recreation impacts and access for future management.
Principle 9	Optimise sustainability	Sustainability will be considered as part of the planning balance by the LPA in their decision making.
Principle 10	Be transparent	The author of this biodiversity gain assessment has sought to provide clear and transparent information throughout, including the provision of rationales and relevant commentary, to assist the reader, in their review of the submission.

4 References

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5 Figures

Figure 1: Baseline Habitat Plan

Figure 2: Proposed Habitat Plan



Legend

- Target note
- Existing Small Rural Tree
- Fence
- Modified grassland
- Site boundary

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JOB REF: P25-356

PROJECT TITLE

PENISTONE BLAST ZONE LAND

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 1: Baseline Habitats Plan

DATE: 19/05/2026 CHECKED: KH SCALE: 1:1,000

DRAWN: MZ APPROVED: JF VERSION:1.1

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Sources: BSG Ecology survey data

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Legend

- Proposed Small Urban Tree
- Lost Rural Tree
- Hedge Ornamental Non Native (h2NE3)
- Introduced shrub
- Vegetated garden
- Other neutral grassland
- Modified grassland
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Site boundary

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JOB REF: P25-356

PROJECT TITLE

PENISTONE BLAST ZONE LAND

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 2: Proposed Habitats Plan

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Appendix 1: Landscape Masterplan

Golby and Luck Landscape Architects (2026). *Landscape Masterplan*. Drawing Reference: GLY0237 MP 01.



Key

Application site boundary.

Existing vegetation to be retained and reinforced at the site boundaries.

Existing vegetation to be removed.

Proposed highways and housing. Plot frontages will consist of a combination of lawn and flowering shrubs.

Proposed ornamental hedgerows define plot boundaries and soften parking areas within the streetscape

Proposed on-plot and garden tree planting.

Proposed screen planting to rear garden walls.

Proposed feature tree planting at key focal points around the site.

Proposed open space tree planting.

Proposed meadow grassland to open spaces.

Proposed amenity grassland to open spaces.

Rev	Date	Notes	Int.

PROJECT
White Hart Road, Penistone

DRAWING TITLE
Landscape Masterplan

CLIENT
Bellway Yorkshire

STATUS
Planning

SCALE
1:500@A1

DRAWN
AM

CHECKED
DC

DATE
15/05/2026

DRAWING REFERENCE
GLY0237 MP 01

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Appendix 2: Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments

(supplied as a separate excel spreadsheet)

Appendix 3: Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator Tool

(supplied as a separate excel spreadsheet)

Appendix 4: Summaries of Relevant Policy, Legislation and Other Instruments

5.1 This section briefly summarises the legislation, policy and related issues that are relevant to the main text of the report. The following text does not constitute legal or planning advice.

Relevant Local Plan Policy

5.2 The following current and emerging Local Plan policies are of relevance to ecology and biodiversity.

Barnsley Local Plan – Adopted January 2019 (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2019a)

'Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure' states:

"*We will protect, maintain, enhance and create an integrated network of connected and multi functional Green Infrastructure assets that:*

Provides attractive environments where people want to live, work, learn, play, visit and invest;

Meets the environmental, social and economic needs of communities across the borough and the wider City Regions;

Enhances the quality of life for present and future residents and visitors;

Helps to meet the challenge of climate change;

Enhances biodiversity and landscape character;

Improves opportunities for recreation and tourism;

Respects local distinctiveness and historical and cultural heritage;

Maximises potential economic and social benefits; and

Secures and improves linkages between green and blue spaces;

At a strategic level Barnsley's Green Infrastructure network includes the following corridors which are shown on the Green Infrastructure Diagram:

River Dearne Valley Corridor.

River Dove Valley Corridor.

River Don Valley Corridor.

Dearne Valley Green Heart Corridor.

Historic Landscape Corridor.

The network of Green Infrastructure will be secured by protecting open space, creating new open spaces as part of new development, and by using developer contributions to create and improve Green Infrastructure.

We have produced a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Barnsley which is informed by the Leeds City Region and South Yorkshire Green Infrastructure Strategies."

'Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity' states:

"*Development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough by:*

Protecting and improving habitats, species, sites of ecological value and sites of geological value with particular regard to designated wildlife and geological sites of international, national and local significance, ancient woodland and species and habitats of principal importance identified via Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (for list of the species and habitats of principal importance) and in the Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan.

Maximising biodiversity and geodiversity opportunities in and around new developments.

Conserving and enhancing the form, local character and distinctiveness of the boroughs natural assets such as the river corridors of the Don, the Dearne and Dove as natural floodplains and important strategic wildlife corridors.

Proposals will be expected to have followed the national mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate) which is used to evaluate the impacts of a development on biodiversity interest.

Protecting ancient and veteran trees where identified. Encouraging provision of biodiversity enhancements.

Development which may harm a biodiversity or geological feature or habitat, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, will not be permitted unless effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures can be ensured.

Development which adversely effects a European Site will not be permitted unless there is no alternative option and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI)."

Barnsley Local Plan: Supplementary Planning Document – Biodiversity and Geodiversity (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2019b)

The following advice considered relevant to the Site and mitigation requirements that are expected within development sites in Barnsley have been extracted from the section 'Integrating Biodiversity into Developments in Barnsley':

"*Landscaping proposals within development schemes should seek to retain, enhance and create habitats of value to biodiversity whilst adhering to the mitigation hierarchy, avoid, mitigate, compensate and offset. The creation of front and rear gardens in householder development is encouraged as they can provide multiple environmental benefits, where this cannot be guaranteed then developers should, when completing the Defra statutory metric include "un-vegetated garden" as the post development habitat type within the statutory metric to ensure additional Biodiversity Units are not gained.*

Additionally, the use of native species of local provenance is encouraged as they generally offer more benefits to local wildlife than non-native species, as well as enhanced biosecurity and additional net gains. Applicants are expected to provide landscape features in keeping and proportionate to the size of the development and appropriate with the local context.

Details regarding the mitigation requirements for developments in Barnsley are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Mitigation/enhancement requirements

Feature	***Requirement in developments***	***National/Local Policy references***
Habitats (area/linear/ river)	*Development proposals will have due regard to the baseline biodiversity value of a development site and landscaping plans should identify opportunities to retain and maximise the*	*NPPF 2023 (see Appendix B), GS1, GI1, BIO1*

	provision for biodiversity within the new development. *Minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain based on baseline ecological assessment should be achieved.*	
Bat and bird boxes	*100% of all new dwellings to include integrated bat and bird boxes, alongside the provision of bird boxes in retained/newly created habitat on site to provide nesting habitat for a variety of species. In respect of birds, integrated swift boxes are advised as these are also used by other common nesting species. On constrained sites, practical consideration should be given to prioritising boxes within optimum areas of the site and be based on best practice.*	*BIO1*
Bats	*Sensitive lighting schemes to be developed where additional lighting from the development will impact habitats such woodland edges, hedgerows, river corridors and wetlands, or any other habitats considered suitable for foraging, commuting and roosting bats. Developers should refer to the most up to date bats and lighting guidance[1] to ensure impacts to bats are kept to minimal levels.*	*BIO1*
Hedgehog	*Hedgehog Highway gaps to be located in boundary fences in residential schemes ensuring connectivity between gardens for hedgehogs and other wildlife, increasing the extent of habitat availability.*	*BIO1*
Invertebrates	*Landscaping features within development sites should include flowering lawns/wildflower grasslands, pollen and nectar rich plants, shrubs and trees.* *Invertebrate boxes to be installed on suitable trees within development sites, alongside the provision of bee banks and brash piles.*	*BIO1"*

National Planning Policy Framework (England)

The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024. Text excerpts from the NPPF are shown where they may be relevant to planning applications and biodiversity including protected sites, habitats and species.

The Government sets out the three objectives for sustainable development (economy, social and environmental) at paragraphs 8-10 to be delivered through the plan preparation and implementation level and 'are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged' (paragraph 9). The planning system's environmental objective is 'to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity…'(paragraph 8c).

In conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF (Paragraph 187) states that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment' by:

- Protecting and enhancing...sites of biodiversity value... '(in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'.

[1] "*Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night, Guidance Note 08/23"*

- Recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services… including… trees and woodland.
- Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.
- Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

In respect of protected sites, at paragraph 188, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to distinguish, at the plan level, '…between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value...take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.' A footnote to paragraph 188 refers to the preferred use of agricultural land of poorer quality if significant development of agricultural land is to take place.

Paragraph 192 refers to how plans should aim to protect and enhance biodiversity. Plans should: 'identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity [a footnote refers to ODPM Circular 06/2005 for further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity in the planning system], wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;' and to 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.'

Paragraph 193 advises that, when determining planning applications, '…local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'

In paragraph 194, the following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and

- sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.'

In paragraph 195 the NPPF refers back to sustainable development in relation to appropriate assessment and states: 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site'.

In paragraph 196, the NPPF refers to planning policies and decisions taking account of ground conditions and risks arising from land instability and contamination at sites. In relation to risks associated with land remediation account is to be taken of 'potential impacts on the natural environment' that arise from land remediation.

In paragraph 198 the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that development is appropriate to the location and take into account likely effects (including cumulative) on the natural environment and, in doing so, they 'should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation' (paragraph 198c).

The Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act includes the requirement for mandatory biodiversity gain for all qualifying developments in England through an amendment to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which came into force on 12 February 2024. For all qualifying developments in England, The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024 (SI44) at Regulation 3 advises in relation to planning applications that '*the biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to a planning permission within the scope of regulation 2 (2) of these Regulations, where the application for planning permission was made before 12th February 2024*'. From 12 February 2024, the Act and associated secondary Regulations (SI2024 No's 44- 50) insert amendments into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which in summary require the following for all qualifying developments in England:

- The provision of a required percentage of biodiversity gain, currently set nationally to be at 10%, as a general condition of planning permission,

- The use of the statutory Biodiversity Metric to calculate the biodiversity gain,

- Submission to and approval by the planning authority, of a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) for the development before the development may be begun; the BGP is to be prepared using a template prepared by Defra to demonstrate how biodiversity gain will be delivered on and / or off-site and how the biodiversity gain hierarchy has been applied so that the local planning authority can take account of the approach taken when deciding whether to approve the BGP,

- Significant on-site biodiversity gain and all off-site biodiversity gain to be secured for a fixed period, currently nationally set at 30 years,

- Alternative arrangements to be made for the purpose of minimising the adverse effect of development to habitats deemed to be irreplaceable habitat (see NPPF),

- Demonstration of how the biodiversity gain will be secured, typically through planning obligations in a section 106 agreement,

- Registration of off-site biodiversity gain and allocation of relevant biodiversity units to a given development in a national register for which Natural England is the Register Operator,

- Use of statutory biodiversity credits through the Secretary of State, which is considered to be a last resort, if onsite and/or off-site biodiversity gains cannot achieve the required percentage.