

Halifax Road, PenistoneBiodiversity Net Gain Assessment



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Issuing office

3 Brunel House | Hathersage Park | Station Approach | Hathersage | Derbyshire | S32 1DP T: 01433 651869 | W: www.bsg-ecology.com | E: info@bsg-ecology.com

| Client | Barratt & David Wilson Homes |
|---------------------|---|
| Project | Halifax Road, Penistone, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment |
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| | Name | Position | Date |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Originated | Gemma Watkinson | Ecologist | 06 May 2021 |
| Reviewed | Jim Fairclough | Principal Ecologist | 06 May 2021 |
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| Approved for issue to client | Jim Fairclough | Principal Ecologist | 21 May 2021 |
| Issued to client | Gemma Watkinson | Ecologist | 21 May 2021 |

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1 Introduction

Background to commission

1.1 BSG Ecology was commissioned in April 2021 by Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes Yorkshire West to undertake a biodiversity net gain assessment of the proposed development to the south of Halifax Road, Penistone (centred at OS grid reference SE245043); the 'Site'. The assessment reviews the current Planning Layout Masterplan (SLR, 2021) and considers existing baseline survey information of the Site to enable the completion of the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculation Tool (Defra, December 2019). The outcome of this is a calculation of the potential for biodiversity net gain to be delivered by the proposed development.

Site description

1.2 The Site comprises three large agricultural grassland fields, as defined by the red line boundary shown in Figure 1. A single mature ash tree is located in the south-west corner, and there are three sections of species-poor native hedgerows on the southern boundary of the Site.

Proposed Development

1.3 The proposals for the Site are to construct 402 dwellings with associated infrastructure and Public Open Space. Most of the existing habitats will be removed from the Site as part of the development, with the exception of 1.5 ha of modified grassland that will be retained.



2 Methods

Stage 1 - Desk based assessment

- 2.1 A desk based scoping assessment was undertaken including:
 - The Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC) was contacted to provide information on non-statutory sites within a 1 km radius of the Site.
 - a review of online aerial photographs (such as Google Earth, Bing Maps, and Ordnance Survey Maps) to provide useful supplementary information on the presence of habitats and habitat linkages at the landscape level;
 - a planning policy review of the Barnsley Local Plan (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2019a) to identify any relevant ecology or strategic significance policies; and
 - review of the existing Brooks Preliminary Ecological Impact Assessment Report (Brooks Ecological, 2021), relating specifically to the identification and mapping of habitats and assignment of condition to these.

Stage 2 - Site Walkover

2.2 The Site was visited on 5 May 2021 by Dr Jim Fairclough (Principal Ecologist, BSG Ecology), to undertake a walkover, to confirm the findings of the existing Phase 1 habitat information and baseline assessment provided in the Brooks Ecological Impact Assessment report (Brooks Ecological, 2021) are still accurate. This information was used to establish the baseline habitat types and condition assessment.

Stage 3 – Biodiversity change assessment calculation

- 2.3 The Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculation Tool (Defra, December 2019) was used to make the calculation using the Landscape Masterplan (SLR, 2021) shown on Figure 2 in Appendix 2.
- Using the information obtained from the botanical survey and supported (as appropriate) by relevant information obtained from the desk-based assessment, the habitats present on Site and their condition were identified, with reference to the UK Habitat Classification (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2018) and the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Technical Supplement (Crosher et. al., 2019), and inputted into the pre-development net gain calculation. This provides an on-site baseline from which the biodiversity value of the Site may be derived, given by the number of biodiversity units.
- 2.5 The post-development calculation is based on the desired developable area as shown in the Landscape Masterplan, taking into account any habitat retention, enhancement and creation. The measurements for the habitats to be created on Site were taken directly from the Landscape Architect (SLR) based on the current Landscape Masterplan (210517_Masterplan_RB.dwg). 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

- 2.6 Professional judgement has been applied to suggest realistic habitat type/s and area (in ha) of habitat/s that could potentially be created, what condition they would need to achieve and how they would (broadly) be maintained.
- 2.7 It has been assumed that the garden areas to be created will be retained as vegetated areas by residents, and therefore the category 'Urban Vegetated garden' has been used. This in



accordance with the intended application of the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculation Tool and reflects the level of value that can be attributed by gardens, many of which often make significant contributions to biodiversity¹.

Gaston et al. (2005). Urban Domestic Gardens (IV): the extent of the resources and its associated features. *Biodiversity and Conservation* (2005) 14:3327–3349

Conservation (2005) 14:3327–3349.
Owen, J. (2010) Wildlife of a Garden: A Thirty-year Study. Royal Horticultural Society.

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¹ For example:



3 Results and Recommendations

Desk study

3.1 The Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC) identified one non-statutory designated site within 1 km of the Site. Scout Dike Reservoir Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located approximately 0.8 km west of the Site. This LWS is a reservoir with areas of modified neutral grassland, tall ruderal and scrub habitats and some areas of acid grassland and heath in the surrounding habitats, and an area of coniferous plantation woodland within the LWS. This site is accessible to the public. Given the distance of the Site from the LWS, there are not considered to be any direct or indirect impacts on this site. There are no other statutory or non-statutory designated sites within or adjacent to the proposed development Site.

Local plan policy

- 3.2 The Barnsley Local Plan adopted on January 2019 (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2019a), includes a reference to the delivery of net gain for biodiversity as follows:
- 3.3 "In order to support Barnsley's ambitions and vision the Local Plan objectives are....protect and enhance Barnsley's environmental assets and achieve net gains in biodiversity.
- 2.4 Landscaping should be encouraged in all schemes as it has other benefits including biodiversity provision, climate change resilience and carbon absorption. Any new planting should use a variety of native species which are of local provenance where possible as plants from local sources are better adapted to local conditions and using local sources reduces the risk of introducing diseases and pests. Nectar-rich plants and berry producing shrubs incorporated into planting schemes will be encouraged as they will provide valuable food sources for wildlife, and development of other habitats such as wildflower grassland and wetlands should also be considered.
- 3.5 Planting should, where possible, be designed to link habitats to form corridors for wildlife with existing hedgerows included within developments. Where they have become patchy or overgrown, existing hedgerows should be restored as part of new developments wherever possible.
- 3.6 Policy BIO 1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity states that "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.
 - Encouraging provision of biodiversity enhancements.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 The Barnsley Local Plan does not identify the Site as being located within any designated Wildlife Habitat Network (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2019b).

Phase 1 habitat survey results

3.9 The habitats that make up the Site are as described within the Brooks Ecological Impact Assessment report. There have been no changes on Site since this report was produced, and the results as given in the Ecological Impact Assessment report remain valid.



Modified grassland

3.10 The Site comprises three fields of modified grassland, dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium* perenne and are species-poor. The grassland is of low distinctiveness and is considered to be in poor condition.

Existing trees

3.11 A single mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior* tree is located in the south-western corner of the Site, within the field boundary. This tree is considered likely to qualify as an early ancient tree or fully mature transitional veteran (Brooks Ecological, 2021).

Native species-poor hedgerow

3.12 Three species-poor native hedgerows are present along the field boundary at the south of the Site. One of the hedgerows is considered to be in poor condition, and two are considered to be in moderate condition (Brooks Ecological, 2021). All three hedgerows are of low distinctiveness.

Biodiversity net gain calculation

- 3.13 The Site is a total of 15.08 ha of which 0.9 ha is proposed for semi-natural habitat creation.
- 3.14 The post-development scenario was inputted into the Defra Metric 2.0, using habitat areas calculated from the Landscape Masterplan (ref: 210517_Masterplan_RB.dwg). The existing mature tree and the species-poor hedgerows are expected to be retained and enhanced within the proposals. Approximately 1.5 ha of modified grassland will be retained at the west of the Site, and the remaining areas of modified grassland will be lost as a result of the proposed development of the Site.
- 3.15 The areas of species-rich neutral grassland and amenity grassland in public open space areas, native mixed scrub planting, urban orchard, ornamental shrub planting and the area covered by front and back gardens within the proposed development were measured.
- 3.16 Areas of species-rich grassland will be appropriately managed to allow the plant species to flower, and set seed, however the locations of these areas is such that they are likely to be used also for dog walking and play, therefore it is considered that a target condition of 'moderate' is appropriate.
- 3.17 The front and back gardens included within the development are assumed to be vegetated and therefore the category 'Urban Vegetated garden' has been used.
- 3.18 The areas covered by the houses, garages, roads and driveways/parking areas were measured separately and included as 'Urban Developed land; sealed surface'.
- 3.19 The streetscaping includes street trees and beech hedging. Trees to be planted within the streetscape are assumed to be small and those outside of the streetscape are calculated separately and assumed to be medium.
- 3.20 A summary is provided below, detailing the biodiversity outcome for the post-development scenario based on the current Landscape Masterplan (210517_Masterplan_RB.dwg), provided in Figure 1 in Appendix 1. Figure 3 shows the headline results of the metric calculation, provided in Appendix 2.

Biodiversity Net Gain Metric outcome

3.1 The Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 has been used to quantify biodiversity net gain. With the incorporation of the above habitat creation measures, the following 'habitat unit' scores have been calculated:

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- Existing Site baseline = 30.16 Habitat Units
- Post-development habitat creation outcome = 18.08 Habitat Units



- Change in Habitat Units = -12.08 Habitat Units, which is equivalent to 40.05% <u>biodiversity</u> <u>loss</u>
- 3.2 The following 'linear unit' scores have been calculated:
 - Existing Site baseline = 1.40 Hedgerow Units
 - Post-development outcome = 10.87 Hedgerow Units
 - Change in Hedgerow Units = +9.47 Hedgerow Units, which is equivalent to 676.28% gain in hedgerow units.
- 3.3 Appendix 2 provides a summary overview of the metric calculations. Please note that the full Excel spreadsheet is available on request; the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 has not been devised for use in printed form.
- 3.4 It is recommended that a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) will be prepared and implemented for a period of up to 15 years to provide certainty in delivery of this outcome.

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4 References

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (2019a). Barnsley Local Plan – Adopted January 2019. https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/17249/local-plan-adopted.pdf [accessed 06/05/2019].

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

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Crosher I. A., Gold S. B., Heaver M. D., Heydon M. A., Moore L. D., Panks S. A., Scott S. C., Stone D. A. And White N. A. (2019) The Biodiversity Metric 2.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement (Beta version, July 2019). Natural England

Defra (2018) Net Gain Consultation Proposals: December 2018, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, London.

Defra (2019) The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 – Calculation Tool – Beta Test December 2019 Update, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, London.

Natural England (2010). Higher Level Stewardship: Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual. Techical guidance on the completion of the FEP and identification, condition assessment, and recording of HLS FEP features. Third Edition – March 2010.

STEN Architecture (2020). Penistone: Planning Layout. Drawing number 2001.01_L. Dated 17/12/20.

SLR (2021). Halifax Road, Penistone: Landscape Masterplan. Drawing number: 210517_Masterplan_RB.dwg.

The UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2018) The UK Habitat Classification: Habitat Definitions Version 1.0 at http://ecountability.co.uk/ukhabworkinggroup-ukhab

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Appendix 1: Post-development proposed habitat creation

Figure 1: STEN Architecture (2020). Penistone: Planning Layout. Drawing number 2001.01_L. Dated 17/12/20.

Figure 2: Current Landscape Masterplan (SLR (2021). Halifax Road, Penistone: Landscape Masterplan. Drawing number: 210517_Masterplan_RB.dwg).

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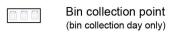
This drawing, design and concept are copyright of STEN Architecture.

All Dimensions are to be verified on site before any work commences. If any discrepancies, errors or emissions are noted, these are to be reported to STEN Architecture immediately.

If any other drawings are referenced within this layout, please refer to the specific detailed drawing for design, materials and specific working practices.

PLANNING LAYOUT KEY

Tree/vegetation to be retained.



Proposed 3m pedestrian/cycleway (Proposed route in black tarmac with white painted markings and directional signage at junctions.)







TS 06.04.21

TS 21.03.21

TS 16.03.21

TS 25.01.21

TS 13.01.21

TS 11.01.21

TS 18.12.20

BARRATT -----HOMES-----

TS | 18.01.21 | SITE: Penistone

Planning Layout SCALE AT A1: 17.12.20 TS SL PROJECT NO: 2001.01 2001

100m





Appendix 2: Metric Calculation

Figure 3: Defra Metric Headline results

| | Habitat units | 30.16 |
|--|----------------|---------|
| On-site baseline | Hedgerow units | 1.40 |
| | River units | 0.00 |
| | | |
| On-site post-intervention | Habitat units | 18.08 |
| (Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement & | Hedgerow units | 10.87 |
| succession) | River units | 0.00 |
| - Constitution of the Cons | | |
| | Habitat units | 0.00 |
| Off-site baseline | Hedgerow units | 0.00 |
| on site baseine | River units | 0.00 |
| | | |
| Off cita pact intervention | Habitat units | 0.00 |
| Off-site post-intervention | Hedgerow units | 0.00 |
| (Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement & | River units | 0.00 |
| | | |
| Total net unit change | Habitat units | -12.08 |
| | Hedgerow units | 9.47 |
| (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention/creation) | River units | 0.00 |
| | | |
| Total net % change | Habitat units | -40.05% |
| (including all on-site & off-site habitat creation + retained habitats) | Hedgerow units | 676.28% |
| lincluding all on-site & off-site habitat creation + retained habitats) | River units | 0.00% |

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