Brooks Ecological
Grounded advice

Whaley Road, Barnsley

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Baseline)

Report Ref. ER-7645-02

25/06/2024

Naylor Concrete Products

Report reference	**ER-7645-02 – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Baseline)**
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Date	25/06/2024
Report duration	In accordance with CIEEM (2019), unless otherwise stated the findings of this report remain valid for a period of 18 months. After this period advice should be sought on the scope of any updating work required.

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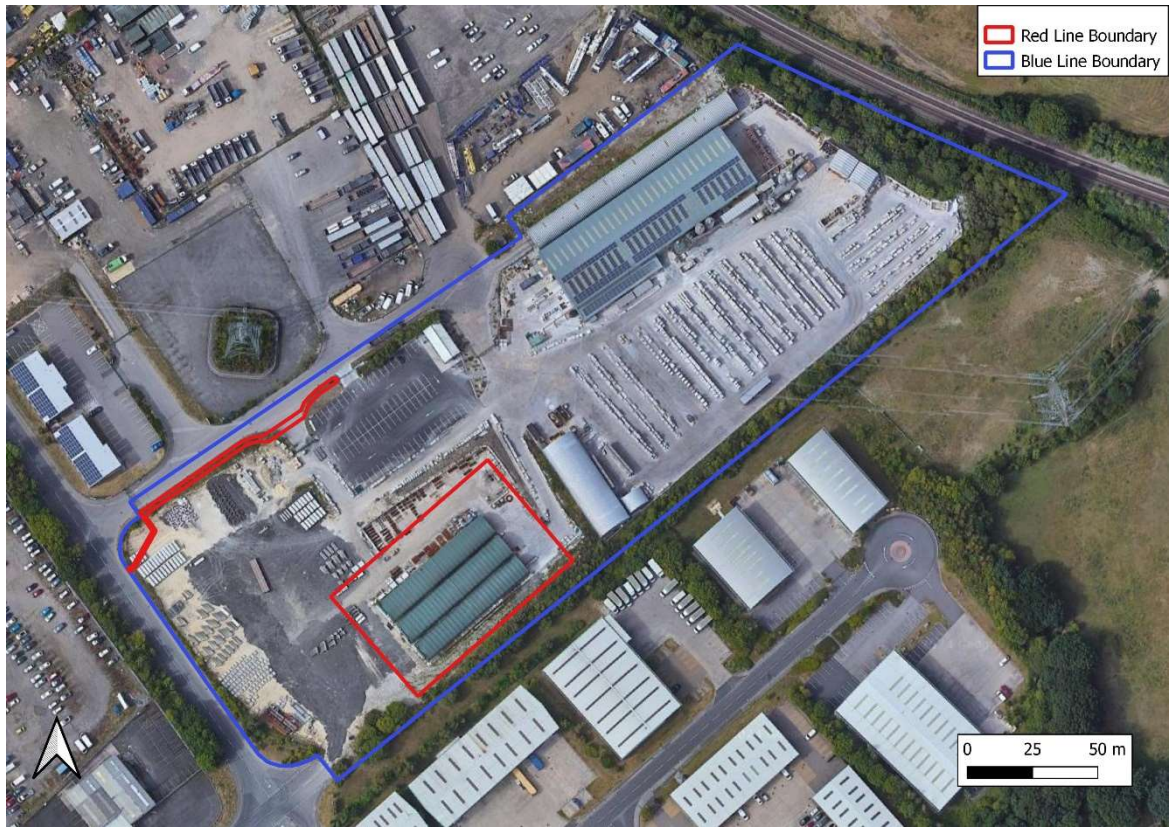
Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological Ltd was commissioned by Naylor Concrete Products to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of the proposed development Site at Whaley Road, Barnsley.
2. The assessment applies to the parcels of land shown in Figure 1 opposite, with both the development site (red-line boundary) and off-site land under the same ownership (blue-line land) assessed.
3. The assessment is informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey of the Site detailed in our report ER-7645-01.
4. Biodiversity Accounting metrics are used to quantify the value of a site in Biodiversity Units, which helps in assessing the ecological impacts of the proposed development on the Site.
5. Biodiversity Units can help to inform avoidance, or on-Site mitigation levels required; or as a last resort can translate to a direct monetary value where compensation (off-Site) is required.
6. For the purposes of metric calculations, the Site area has been measured using GIS against the provided red line boundary as 0.43ha.

Limitations

7. The PEA was carried out during May 2024. The timing of the survey meant that it was possible to confidently classify the type and condition of habitats present on this Site

Figure 1 Extent of BNG assessment (red line boundary).



Pre-development baseline

Habitats identified

8. Habitats present on-Site are outlined in Table 1, opposite. These are shown in relation to location and extent in Figure 2 overleaf.

Condition Assessment

9. Habitat condition has been assessed as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Site.

10. Information on condition assessments is provided in the Excel spreadsheet CA-7645-01 provided alongside this report.

Strategic Significance

11. None of the habitats on-Site fall within or close to a Wildlife Habitat Network, and so all are mapped as 'area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy'.

Irreplaceable Habitat

12. Irreplaceable habitats have not been found on-Site.

Habitat Degradation

13. There is no evidence on Site or in aerial mapping of the Site which suggests that it has been deliberately degraded.

Biodiversity Metric

14. Habitat types, conditions, and areas have been entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, alongside information on their strategic significance.

15. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool is provided alongside this assessment, in Excel spreadsheet BM-7645-01, and may be useful in investigating design options for the Site.

Table 1 Red-line Habitat Types.

Habitat	Label ref.	Irreplaceable?	Distinctiveness	Condition	See Condition Assessment sheet
Developed land; sealed surface	DL1	No	Very low	N/A	N/A
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	AU1	No	Very Low	N/A	N/A
Vacant or derelict land	V1	No	Low	Poor	22A

Table 2 Blue-line Habitat Types.

Habitat	Label ref.	Irreplaceable?	Distinctiveness	Condition	See Condition Assessment sheet
Developed land; sealed surface	DL2, DL3	No	Very low	N/A	N/A
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	AU2, AU3	No	Very Low	N/A	N/A
Mixed Scrub	MS1	No	Medium	Poor	20A
Other Neutral Grassland	ONG1	No	Medium	Moderate	6B
Other Neutral Grassland	ONG2	No	Medium	Poor	6B

Figure 2 The Site's habitats assigned to types used in the Biodiversity Metric. Labelled codes cross-reference to our condition assessment and description in the PEAR, which should be read in conjunction with this report.

Figure 3 Extract from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool showing entered information and resultant red-line land Biodiversity Units[1].

	Existing area habitats				Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Ecological baseline
Ref	Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance		Total habitat units
1	Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	No	0.2603	V.Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Compensation Not Required	0.00
2	Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	No	0.1172	V.Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Compensation Not Required	0.00
3	Urban	Vacant or derelict land	No	0.0557	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	0.11
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
			Total habitat area	0.43					0.11
			Site Area (Excluding area of individual trees, green walls, intertidal hard structures)	0.43					

Figure 4 Extract from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool showing entered information and resultant blue-line land Biodiversity Units[2].

	Existing area habitats				Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Spatial risk multiplier	Ecological baseline
Ref	Broad habitat	Habitat type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance		Spatial risk category	Total habitat units
1	Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	No	2.2389	V.Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Compensation Not Required	Compensation inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.00
2	Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	No	0.8793	V.Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Compensation Not Required	Compensation inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.00
3	Urban	Introduced shrub	No	0.0182	Low	Condition Assessment N/A	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	Compensation inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.04
4	Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	No	0.5676	Medium	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	Compensation inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	2.27
5	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	No	0.1009	Medium	Moderate	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	Compensation inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.81
6	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	No	0.0251	Medium	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	Compensation inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.10
7	Urban	Vacant or derelict land	No	0.0107	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	Compensation inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.02
8										
9										
10										
11										
		Total habitat area		3.84						3.24

[1] Our report provides an estimate of the Site's value in Biodiversity Units. This is based on thorough assessment at the time of survey and using the information available at this time. In this assessment we have used the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, the UK Habitats Classification, and relevant guidance. This assessment requires subjective judgments to be made in terms of habitat type and condition and could be open to other interpretations. Reliance on the Unit Score, or conversion of this into a monetary value, would be at the developer's own risk. Where conversion to monetary value is required, it is always advisable to get calculations checked independently.

[2] Our report provides an estimate of the Site's value in Biodiversity Units. This is based on thorough assessment at the time of survey and using the information available at this time. In this assessment we have used the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, the UK Habitats Classification, and relevant guidance. This assessment requires subjective judgments to be made in terms of habitat type and condition and could be open to other interpretations. Reliance on the Unit Score, or conversion of this into a monetary value, would be at the developer's own risk. Where conversion to monetary value is required, it is always advisable to get calculations checked independently.

Trading Rules

16. As part of delivering a Net Gain for biodiversity, the BNG process requires that trading rules are complied with, such that loss of habitats is compensated for in a like-for-like or like-for-better fashion. This is based on habitat distinctiveness.

17. Once trading rules are complied with, the 'gain' component can come from any distinctiveness category.

Habitat Unit Score

18. The red-line Site has been assessed as having a baseline score of 0.11 Habitat Units. These break down as shown in Table 2, below.

Table 3 Habitat Units broken down by distinctiveness at this Site.

Distinctiveness	Units	Approach to compensation if lost
Very Low	0	No compensation required.
Low	0.11	Losses must be replaced with area habitat units of the same or higher distinctiveness.
Medium	0	Losses must be replaced by area habitat units of either medium distinctiveness habitats within the same broad habitat type, or any habitat from a higher distinctiveness from any broad habitat type.
High	0	Losses must be replaced with area habitat units of the same habitat type.
Very High	0	Priority should be given to replacing losses with area habitat units of the same habitat type.
Irreplaceable	0	Cannot be compensated for.

2

Planning your development

Mitigation Hierarchy

19. To engage with the Biodiversity Gain process, a project must be able to demonstrate that it has complied with the Mitigation Hierarchy of Avoid – Mitigate – Compensate. Its relevance to this Site is set out in Table 3 below.

Table 4 Mitigation hierarchy summary.

Level of Hierarchy	Requirement at this Site
First **Avoid**	The PEA has established that there are no Very High, High or Medium distinctiveness habitats within the red-line boundary.
then **Mitigate**	It is expected that the creation of the new warehousing will encroach onto the area of vacant/derelict land, and as such it would be very difficult to retain this habitat within any development, and therefore the structure and habitat it provides would be lost. This loss could be mitigated in part by designing in structured landscaping with native species, around the new warehousing.
then **Compensate**	Any residual loss would need to be compensated off-Site. If it is not possible to deliver a Net Gain on-Site alongside development here, this element will be required.

20. Assuming the recommendations set out above can be followed, it seems likely that the mitigation hierarchy can be complied with. These recommendations should be a consideration of any design work.

Summary & Recommendations

Baseline value

21. The red-line Site's baseline value is measured as 0.11 Habitat Units.

22. The blue-line land's baseline value is measured as 3.24 Habitat Units. There is scope for habitats in this area to be enhanced, as part of measures to off-set the small loss of habitat within the red-line land.

Trading Rules

23. As shown in Table 2, all of the Site's baseline value is accounted for by low distinctiveness habitat types. Satisfying Trading Rules is therefore not likely to be constraint.

Recommendations

24. The following recommendations are made.

Table 5 Summary of Planning Considerations.

Recommendation	Rationale
Required during the design stage process	
R1 Produce a layout which minimises loss of biodiversity	Engage with the recommendations set out above, involve your ecologist in designs at an early stage, as required. The proposals will need to consider the NPPF hierarchy of Avoid – Mitigate – Compensate in minimising any loss of biodiversity.
R2 Produce a Habitat Retention Plan	Make sure your design team follows ecological advice to and make sure there are no design conflicts. The Habitat Retention Plan should identify areas which can be excluded from any impacts of clearance and construction. In producing the Plan you should consider the need to provide (amongst other things) Site compounds, to store and move materials, to install drainage, flood storage, access and services - all with suitable easements.
R2 Biodiversity Gain Strategy (BGS)	Engage an ecologist to work with the design team to maximise available Biodiversity Units on-Site, taking into account Trading rules. Identify opportunities to address any losses off-Site.
Required during the design stage process	
R3 Landscape Design	Make sure your landscape architect follows ecological advice or the BGS to maximise Biodiversity Units on-Site and make sure there are no design conflicts.
To be completed once a fixed Site Layout is agreed	
R4 Calculate the final Biodiversity Impact Score	Once the Site Layout is fixed and a Habitat Retention Plan is produced, the DEFRA Metric will be used to quantify change in biodiversity unit value at the Site. This report will then be updated to include the Post development scores.

Biodiversity Offsetting

25. Development of the Site is very likely to result in the requirement to offset losses elsewhere. Potential means of achieving this would be:

- Creating a bespoke offset on land available to the developer, as locally as possible. In this instance, the wider concrete plant area may be suitable for habitat creation/enhancement.
- Making use (through contribution) of any Local Authority habitat banking scheme, if this is available.
- Purchasing the necessary Units from a broker or habitat banking scheme, again as locally as possible (and ideally within the same Local Authority or Natural Character area/s as the development).
- Purchasing Statutory Credits from the UK government scheme. This is the last resort and is deliberately priced to be uncompetitive. Twice as many Credits will be required as there are Units to offset.

References

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). 2019. *Advice note: on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys.* Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. [Online]. Available from: https://cieem.net/resource/advice-note-on-the-lifespan-of-ecological-reports-and-surveys/

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (draft). 2023. London: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). [Online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

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The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments. 2023. London: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). [Online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

Appendices

The following reports/digital documents have been provided alongside this report and should be read in conjunction with it:

- BM-7645-01 – Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool
- CA-7645-01 – Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments
- ER-7645-01 – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal