



Proposed Security Fence and Associated Facilities, Darton, Longfields Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Prepared on behalf of

North Gawber Colliery Football Club

Final Report

03 December 2025

Proposed Security Fence and Associated Facilities, Darton, Longfields

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Document Control

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Provided no significant changes are made to the proposals or on the site subsequent to the report's issue; this report can be considered valid for 18 months from the date of issue, in line with CIEEM's Advice Note on The Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys (2019).

As part of membership to our professional body (CIEEM) we are required to provide our biological results to applicable biological record centres. As such, it is our intention to supply biological data collected as part of this assessment to the relevant centre unless directly instructed in writing not to do so by the client.

Proposed Security Fence and Associated Facilities, Darton, Longfields

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- Liz Ecology was commissioned by North Gawber Colliery Football Club to conduct a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the land at Proposed Security Fence and Associated Facilities, Darton, Longfields. The survey was conducted to support a planning application for the construction of security fences, and associated facilities for football pitches.
- The purpose of this report is to identify the net percentage change in biodiversity on-site post-development and to aim for a minimum of a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
- Mandatory biodiversity net gain set out in the Environment Act 2021 came into force on 2nd April for small sites. This requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.
- The development site is approximately 2.095ha and consists of modified grassland.
- The baseline habitat units are 4.82 and hedgerow units are 0.00.
- It is predicted that the proposal will have 5.36 habitat units created, with a net gain of 0.54 units, showing a 11.29% net gain. This is achieved by enhancing an area of modified grassland from poor to moderate condition, and planting 10 small moderate condition trees. Management of this will be incorporated into the general management of the site.

Proposed Security Fence and Associated Facilities, Darton, Longfields

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Liz Ecology was commissioned by North Gawber Colliery Football Club to conduct Biodiversity Net Gain assessment of Proposed Security Fence and Associated Facilities, Darton, Longfields (Grid reference: SE 30919 10262).
- 1.2 The survey was conducted to support the planning application for the construction of security fences and associated facilities for football pitches.
- 1.3 The aim of this report is to identify the net percentage change in biodiversity on site post-development and where possible to seek a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in accordance with the statutory requirements and National Planning Policy. Where 10% is not achievable by the proposals we will seek to make recommendations for amendments to the proposals or third party compensation to meet the 10% target.

Site description

- 1.4 The site is approximately 2.095ha and consists of modified grassland. Immediately adjacent to the site there is a strip of woodland, and the River Dearne. There is a footpath between the site and the River Dearne.
- 1.5 The site is located within the village of Darton, northwest of Barnsley, east of Kexborough and west of Mapplewell. It is an area of designated greenbelt which extends to a more rural landscape. The site offers limited foraging habitat for aerial species, including bats and birds. The habitat immediately adjacent to the site offers foraging and commuting habitat for both bats and birds.

Brief

- 1.6 To conduct a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment using DEFRA metric version 4.0 to demonstrate, where possible, a minimum of 10% net gain.

Relevant Planning Policy and Legislation

- 1.7 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). All planning permissions granted in England will have to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to be maintained for a period of at least 30 years. The concept seeks measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development.
- 1.8 Mandatory BNG came into force on 12th February 2024 for all developments except exemptions and small sites, and small sites came into force 2nd April 2024 (residential 1-9 units on a site less than one hectare, or number of dwellings is unknown and the site is less than 0.5 hectare; or for non-residential for floor space less than 1000m² or site less than one hectare). Exceptions include developments of less than 25m² habitat or 5m for linear habitats (hedgerows and watercourses), householder applications and small scale self build.
- 1.9 The planning authority for the site is Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

2. METHODOLOGY

Assessing Strategic Significance

- 2.1 A desk study was conducted to collate baseline data about ecological sites within the zone of influence of the proposed development site, following guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). This data-gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory nature conservation sites, ecological networks, local plans and priority habitats to help establish the strategic significance of the site. Sources of information used are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of information sources used for the desk study

Organisation/source	Information sought
MAGIC	Locations of and citations for all national statutory wildlife sites, including SSSI, and all international sites including SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites within a 5 kilometre radius of the site. Priority Habitats within 300m radius of the site.
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Adopted Local Plan, Emerging Local Plan 2027, evidence base, and polices map

- 2.2 This evidence was reviewed and used to assess the strategic significance of the site, and/or individual habitats and whether it lies within an ecological network for the area.

Baseline Assessment

- 2.3 A baseline botanical assessment was undertaken by Elizabeth Davies, qualified ecologist, on 21st August 2025 before works commenced on site in mostly clear, still and dry weather conditions. The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System. Botanical information was collected, focussing on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to enable allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4. Where relevant priority habitats were also identified. The conditions of the habitats on the site were assessed in line with the technical sheets supplied alongside DEFRA Metric 4.0.
- 2.4 The UK habitats map was digitised using QGIS. The mapped habitats were measured using the derived areas, and habitat areas are provided in hectares. Linear features were measured using the derived length and the measurements provided in kilometres.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.5 Biodiversity Net Gain complements and works with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 180a. To achieve a net gain in a way that is consistent with the mitigation hierarchy and reflects the 'spatial-hierarchy' preference for local enhancements, the following steps should be followed:

- (1) Aim to avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts through site selection and layout;
- (2) Enhance and restore biodiversity on-site;
- (3) Create or enhance off-site habitats, either on their own land or by purchasing biodiversity units on the market; and

- (4) As a last resort, to prevent undue delays, purchase statutory biodiversity credits from the UK Government where they can demonstrate that they are unable to achieve biodiversity net gain through the available on-site and off-site options.

2.6 On completion of the fieldwork the habitat information was mapped and areas were imported into the DEFRA Biometric version 4.0 calculation tool. The metric calculates the baseline biodiversity units for the site based on the following factors:

- Area
- Habitat distinctiveness
- Habitat condition
- Strategic significance

2.7 Once inputted the metric provides biodiversity units for the proposed habitats based on the following factors:

- Area
- Habitat distinctiveness
- Habitat target condition
- Strategic significance
- Time habitat is created
- Time to target condition
- Difficulty of creation

2.8 The difference between the baseline units and proposed units is then used as a measure of change and is used to assess the number of biodiversity units achieved. Habitats, hedgerows and rivers are inputted as separate factors, with each requiring net gains.

2.9 **Limitations**

2.10 Whilst every effort has been made to accurately map the habitats on site there may be discrepancies associated with the projected coordinate reference system. The National Grid transformation, however, is considered to be the most accurate with an accuracy level of less than one metre.

3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1 The results of the Baseline Assessment are presented below. A UK Habitat survey map is shown in Appendix I. The map illustrates the location and extent of the sites surveyed, along with additional notable features.

Strategic Significance

3.2 The site is on the western edge of Darton, the site is a designated greenbelt which extends into the wider landscape. The site is surrounded on the west and southern elevations by dense woodland, with some tree lines on the norther boundary. The eastern boundary shows further woodland and grassland The site is adjacent to the River Dearne. The site is therefore well connected to the wider landscape. Further west of the site is an area of industrial buildings.

3.3 There are a number of designated sites within 5km of the site. There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Seckar Wood, SSSI, 3.8km northeast.

3.4 There are two Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within 5km of the site:

- Seckar Wood, LNR, 3.8km northeast.
- Notton Wood, LNR, 2876m northeast.
- Bretton Country Park, LNR, 2419m northwest.
- Chevet Branch Line, LNR, 4.8km northeast.

3.5 These are a minimum of 2.5km radius from the site, and as such are considered to be outside the zone of influence for the site.

3.6 The site is part of a designated green belt site on the local plan, neighborhood plan or other policy document. It is considered to have high strategic significance.

On-Site Habitats

3.8 The following were recorded on site, and are described below:

- Modified grassland.

Modified Grassland

3.9 Much of the site consists of modified grassland. The grassland is managed with a short sward length. Species include perennial rye grass, ribwort plantain, white clover, dandelion, red fescue and creeping thistle. %

3.10 The grassland is a short sward length across the whole area, with physical damage more than 5%,, bare ground approximately 30%, scrub and bracken less than 20% and an absence of invasive, non-native species. There were approximately 3-4 species per m².

3.11 This has a distinctiveness of low, and condition assessment is not required.

Developed land: sealed surface

3.12 There is an existing access road to the site which consists of developed land, sealed surface.

Deciduous woodland

3.13 Around the southern and western boundaries of the site are an extensive area of deciduous woodland, to the eastern elevation there is also an areas of woodland which is show on magic as being priority woodland, deciduous woodland., with species recorded including horse chestnut, sycamore, dales acacia, alder, Scot's pine, sycamore, elder and hornbeam. The understory is comprised of bramble, nettle, creeping buttercup, hogweed, broad-leaved dock, herb Robert and hawthorn.

3.14 The deciduous woodland is off-site, and as such not included within the baseline.

River Dearne Corridor

3.15 The River Dearne is located to the east of the site. There is scrub along the boundary of the River, with species present including rosebay willowherb, nettle, hawthorn, bramble, cock's foot, creeping thistle, stonecrop species, red clover, yarrow, bird's-foot trefoil and perennial rye-grass. Himalayan balsam, a Schedule 9 invasive species was present along the River Corridor too.

3.16 The River Dearne is located more than 10 meters from the development boundary and as such is not included in the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment.

Summary

3.17 Below in table 2 is a summary of the baseline habitats, areas, condition assessment and distinctiveness.

Table 2: Summary of baseline habitats

Habitat	Biodiversity Units	Area (ha)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Suggested action
Modified grassland	4.82	2.095	Poor	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required

4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN METRIC

Biodiversity Metric

4.1 The calculation has been run with the following habitat proposals:

- Enhance 0.3ha of modified grassland, poor condition to moderate condition. This will be achieved by oversowing with a seed mix e.g. Emorsgate EM1 General Purpose Meadow Mixture, to increase number of species within the grassland. Areas of the grassland will be left to grow to a longer sward height, creating ecological niches within the grassland.
- 10 small moderate condition trees will be planted around the edges of the site. These will be native species, and will be managed to create ecological niches.

4.2 The calculation has been based off the current landscaping plans. The biodiversity metric calculated a net change in habitat units of 11.29%. Table 3 below summarises the biodiversity metric results.

Table 3: DEFRA Biodiversity metric results scenario 1

On-site baseline	Habitat units	4.82
	Hedgerow units	0.00
On-site post intervention	Habitat units	5.36
	Hedgerow units	0
Total net change %	Habitat units	11.29%
	Hedgerow units	0
Trading rules satisfied	Yes/No	Yes

4.3 A 10% net gain for biodiversity has been achieved, and the trading rules are satisfied. The measures for management of the habitat will be incorporated into the general management of the site.

4.4 Measures will be implemented to ensure that the Himalayan balsam is not spread from the River Corridor into the development site. This will include ensuring any machinery transported to site is not brushing against the River Corridor vegetation, and that the existing access is the only access which is used. A toolbox talk will be provided to the site manager to emphasise the importance of precautions around Himalayan balsam, particularly between May to October.

5. REFERENCES

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain. Good practice principles for development.

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain. Good practice principles for development. A practical guide. CIRIA C776a. London, 2019.

CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Department for Communities and Local Government (2005), *Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.*

DEFRA (2023) Biodiversity Metric Calculation tool (spreadsheet) (Biodiversity Metric 4.0)

DEFRA (2023) Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User guide

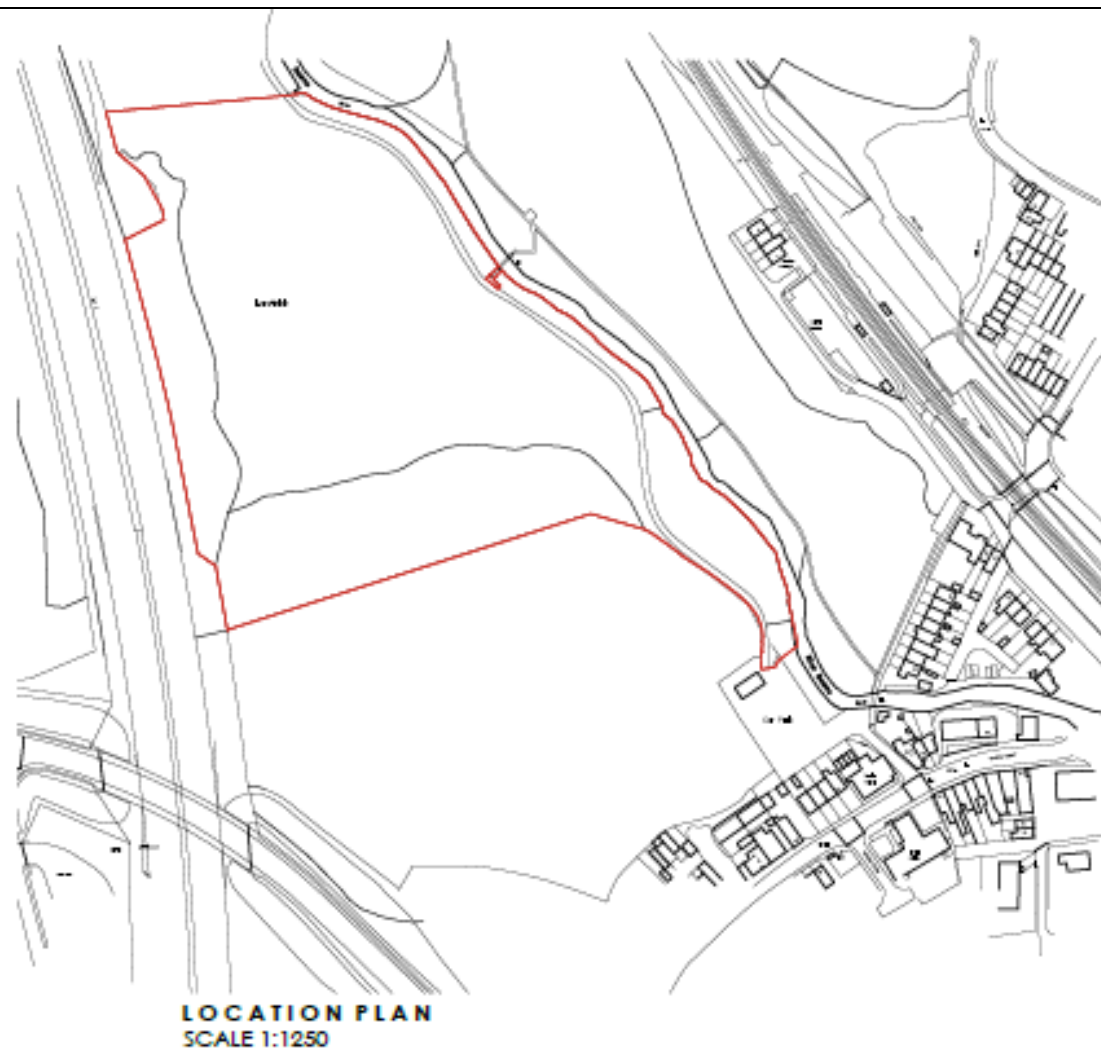
DEFRA (2023) Biodiversity Metric 4.0 and SSM: Technical Annex1 (habitat condition assessments)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework.*

Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Website

Appendix 1

Current site layout



Appendix 2

Proposed site layout





Appendix 3

Onsite Habitat



Key

Site boundary 


Modified grassland 

0 50 100 m

Project: Proposed security fence and associated facilities

Figure 2: Habitats
Date: 29/08/2025 Version: Final

Author: ED



Appendix 4

Site Photographs

Photograph 1: General view of site



Photograph 2: Deciduous woodland off site



Photograph 3: River Dearne Corridor



Photograph 4: Existing access to site



Photograph 5: Himalayan Balsam

