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BRT Stairfoot, Barnsley



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Report Ref. ER-8856-02

21/10/2025

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough

Report reference	ER-8856-02 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
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Date	21/10/2025
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 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of the proposed development Site at BRT Stairfoot, Barnsley.
2. The assessment applies to the parcel of land shown in Figure 1 opposite.
3. The assessment is informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey of the Site detailed in our report ER-8856-01.
4. Biodiversity Accounting metrics are used to quantify the value of a site in Biodiversity Units. This helps in assessing the ecological impacts of the proposed development and 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.
5. For the purposes of metric calculations, the Site area has been measured using GIS against the provided red line boundary as 0.05ha.
6. Our assessment has made use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, and extracts from this have been used throughout the report. The full spreadsheet has been provided digitally as file BM-8856-01 and should be submitted as part of the application.

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



Pre-development baseline

Habitats identified

7. 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

8. Habitat condition has been assessed as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Site.
9. Information on condition assessments is provided in the Excel spreadsheet CA-8856-01 provided alongside this report.

Strategic Significance

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

Irreplaceable habitat

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

Habitat Degradation¹

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

Biodiversity Metric

13. Habitat types, conditions, and areas have been entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, alongside information on their strategic significance.
14. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (published 03/07/2025), is provided alongside this assessment, in Excel spreadsheet BM-8856-01, and may be useful in investigating design options for the Site.

Table 1 Habitat Types.

Habitat	Distinctiveness	Condition	Condition Assessment sheet
Other neutral grassland	Medium	Poor	6A
Other woodland; broadleaved	Medium	Poor	24A

¹ See [Appendices](#) for further information on degradation.

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.



Trading Rules

15. 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.
16. Once trading rules are complied with, the 'gain' component can come from any distinctiveness category.

Habitat Unit Score

17. The Site has been assessed as having a baseline score of 0.20 Habitat Units. These break down as shown in Table 2, below.

Table 2 Habitat Units broken down by distinctiveness at this Site.

Distinctiveness	Units	Approach to compensation if lost
Very Low	n/a	No compensation required.
Low	0	Can be replaced with <u>any</u> habitat of the same distinctiveness (low) or any habitat from a higher distinctiveness (Medium, High or Very High)
Medium	0.20	<u>Can not</u> be replaced with habitats from a lower distinctiveness. Compensation needs to be like for like, or like for better. This means it can only be replaced by habitat from the same broad categories in Medium distinctiveness (in this case other broadleaved woodland and other neutral grassland), or any habitat from a higher distinctiveness category (High or Very High).
High	0	Can only be replaced with the same habitat.
Very High	0	Can only be replaced with the same habitat; bespoke compensation required.
Irreplaceable	n/a	Bespoke compensation required, outside of BNG.

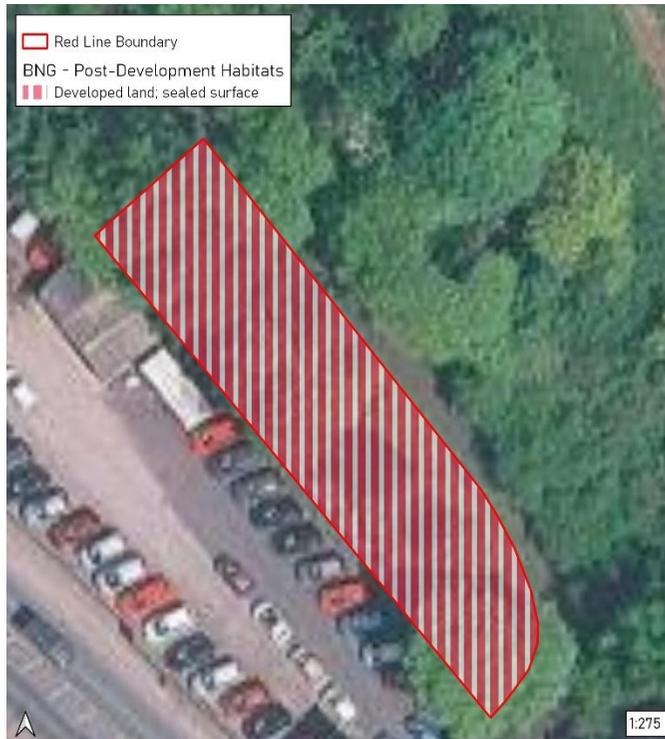
Post-development value²

18. This section calculates the Biodiversity Unit value of the post-development Site and quantifies any gain or shortfall in Units.

Proposed habitats

19. Habitats present on-Site post-development have been based on complete clearance of habitats, due to be replaced by a tarmac surface in its entirety.
20. As such the entire area within the redline boundary will fall under the 'Developed land; sealed surface' UK Habitat Classification, as shown in Figure 3 below, which contributes no Habitat Units to the post development score.

Figure 3 Post-development habitats.



² Please see assumptions section at end of report

Post-development habitats

Habitat Score

21. The Site has been assessed as having a post-development score of 0.00 Habitat Units.
22. Calculations for the change in Habitat Units have been based on the entire Site being cleared of existing habitats and land reprofiled, with no habitat retention, which results in the loss of all 0.20 Habitat Units present pre-development.
23. The loss of Medium-distinctiveness *Other broadleaved woodland* and *Other neutral grassland*, is therefore not compensated for under the current plans. This means that the trading rule cannot be satisfied. Explanation of this and the implications in terms of Units required is set out overleaf.

The BNG Hierarchy

24. The project's engagement with the Mitigation Hierarchy is set out in Appendix 1.

Change in Unit Value

25. The Statutory Metric has been used to calculate the net unit change for the Site; this has been predicted an overall net loss of 0.20 Habitat Units (-100%).
26. A copy of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool Excel spreadsheet (ref. BM-8856-01) and Condition Assessment sheets (CA-8856-01) have been provided with this report and should be submitted digitally as part of the application.

Trading Rules

27. Habitat types are separated out into distinctiveness categories (Very Low to Very High) which dictate what mitigation/compensation is required for their loss. This is assessment is separate to the 'net unit change' score quoted above.
28. To satisfy Trading Rules, specific mitigation is only required for the loss of Medium distinctiveness habitat types and above. Trading Rules will automatically be satisfied for the loss of any Low distinctiveness habitat types once a no net loss position is reached. For the scheme assessed here, specific compensatory units will need to be generated from the broad Habitat Types outlined in table opposite.

Requirements for Planning

29. There is mandatory requirement for all developments to demonstrate at least a 10% net gain in each unit measurement, as well as to satisfy Trading rules. A standard planning condition will be imposed on all decision notices to ensure this is met.
30. To achieve this here, **0.22 Habitat Units** will need to be secured, to be generated within the broad habitats shown in Table 3.
31. These Units are to be secured through offsetting, with offsite land Registered with Natural England, as is currently planned to be purchased from <https://greenearthgroup.co.uk/portfolio-items/stairfoot-quarry/>.
32. Once this offsetting has been secured, the Biodiversity Metric will need to be finalised before submission to the LPA and submission of a final Biodiversity Net Gain Plan may be required.

33. Provision should be made by the LPA and developer to secure the necessary gains through legal agreement - planning obligation or conservation covenant (for off-Site gains) - see further information section at the end of the report for more information on this.

Figure 4 Biodiversity Metric Summary.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Area habitat units</i>	-0.20
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Area habitat units</i>	-100.00%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	

Table 3 Trading rule summary.

Distinctiveness	Broad Habitat Type	Habitat Units required
Medium*	Other broadleaved woodland	0.18
Medium*	Other neutral grassland	0.03
Total Units		0.22 Units

* Compensation for habitats of medium distinctiveness must be in the same broad habitat type, or any habitat type in a higher distinctiveness category.

Assumptions

34. Establishment of the post development value of the Site at this stage is necessarily based on several assumptions which we have set out below, please provide the additional information required against each if this is available:

	Factor	Information Required
1	<p><u>Habitat Loss</u></p> <p>We have assumed that all mapped habitat will be lost from the Site and then replaced by developed land. Should plans change and include retention of habitats, a habitat retention plan showing areas where habitats can be retained un-disturbed will be required.</p>	N/A unless plans change to include habitat retention or areas of temporary impacts - these may be impacted by the above but can be returned to the same habitat within 2 years.
2	<p><u>Phasing</u></p> <p>Unless you have told us otherwise, we have assumed that development will not be phased (in planning terms) and that there will be no delay between habitat loss and purchasing of units / delivery of units off-Site.</p>	Please confirm whether development will be phased.
3	<p><u>Other limiting factors</u></p> <p>Should plans change to include on-Site habitat creation, some limiting factors falling outside of the remit of ecological assessment may affect delivery and require consideration, these may not be apparent to us at this stage. As part of any future management plans produced to deliver Biodiversity Units it will be necessary to assess information on (though not limited to) the following factors - any of which could have a bearing on the Site's potential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive and Non-native Species • Land tenure and public access • Climate • Geology / topography • Soils and substrates • Contaminated Land • Hydrology and Drainage • Flood Risk • Landscape Character and Designations • Historic Environment and Earth Heritage • Services and Infrastructure • Land ownership 	Provide information and reports or references any of the factors which you know will be, or could be, limiting in terms of habitat creation, should this be considered.

	Factor	Information Required
	These factors may be outside of the remit of this report and the expertise of an ecologist. We cannot be responsible for the impact of any of these factors on the potential of the Site to deliver Biodiversity Units. Where other information is not made available, we have assumed they are not limiting	

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/>

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. 2024. *National Planning and Policy Framework*. London: Her Majesty's Government. [Online]. Available from: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide. 2025. 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. 2025. 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-8856-01 - Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool
- CA-8856-01 - Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments
- ER-8856-01 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Habitat degradation

Within Schedule 14 of the Environment Act, which sets out the biodiversity gain condition for development, measures are included that allow planning authorities to recognise any habitat degradation since **30th January 2020** and to take the earlier habitat state as the baseline for the purposes of biodiversity net gain. In order to ascertain the habitats present and their condition on 30th January 2020, aerial imagery or data sets from that time could be used. 30th January 2020 is the relevant date as it was the day the Bill entered Parliament.

In 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA), introduced additional wording further tightening the law regarding degradation by extending the circumstances in which degradation can be addressed. This wording covered both authorised and unauthorised activity on onsite and offsite habitats, on or after **25th August 2023**.

Further information

Further useful information is available on legal agreements to secure Biodiversity Gains at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-agreements-to-secure-your-biodiversity-net-gain>
- <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2024/03/04/securing-off-site-biodiversity-net-gain-expert-legal-perspectives/>

Appendix 1 - BNG Hierarchy

Level of Hierarchy	Advice provided at PEA/BNG Baseline Stage	Response in designs	Linked documents / plans
<i>First</i> Avoid	Clearance of the Medium-distinctiveness habitats – namely other broadleaved woodland and other neutral grassland – should be avoided wherever possible, and minimised where it is not avoidable.	Due to the small size of the Site, avoidance, enhancement and habitat creation within the redline boundary could not be achieved.	N/A
<i>then</i> Enhance	Retained habitats on-Site should be enhanced where possible as an important source of Habitat Units post-development. The grassland (poor condition) presents the greatest opportunities for enhancement.		
<i>then</i> Create	Where possible residual loss of Units should be made up for with Habitat Units generated through the creation of new habitats on-Site. Units may be generated through specific ecologically targeted habitat creation, such as wildflower grassland, and standard amenity habitats, such as amenity grassland and ornamental shrub. Woodland buffering could contribute to this process.		
<i>then</i> Offset	If a 10% Net Gain cannot be achieved on-Site, any remaining deficit will need to be compensated for off-Site.		