

Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and Assessment

Land at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire

23 July 2024

Ecology
Arboriculture
Land Management





Report Details

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Quality Assurance & Revision Record

Revision	Date	Author	Checked By	Approver	Summary of Changes
FINAL	23 July 2024	Anna Galvin BSc MSc	Lindsay Taylor BSc MSC ACIEEM	Lindsay Taylor BSc MSc ACIEEM	

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Site Details

Site Name and Location	Land at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire
Central OS Grid Reference	SU 15156 33956
Client	Persimmon Homes Wessex

Boundary





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1 Introduction

This report provides a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and Assessment for Land at Old Sarum, Sailsbury, Wiltshire in relation to a detailed planning application. The surveys were commissioned by Persimmon Homes Wessex.

The area within the application boundary is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was initially and meets the requirements of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The Environment Act (2021) requires most planning applications in England to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

1.1 Site Context

The Site is part of a wider area which benefits from outline planning consent for a mixed-use scheme (planning ref. S/2005/0211) comprising residential, employment, retail and a local centre. An application for the construction of 41 new dwellings was made in 2021 (planning ref. PL/2021/04084) to which this BNG Statement relates.

1.2 Description of Proposed Development

The proposals include the construction of up to 41 dwellings with associated infrastructure and Public Open Space (POS).

1.3 Aims

The aims of this report are to:

-  Provide the national mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) information requirements.
-  Provide any local BNG information requirements as specified by Wiltshire County Council.
-  Provide the site baseline and an indicative post-development BNG assessment.

2 BNG Statement

2.1 National Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Information

Table 1 provides the BNG information required to support the planning application under Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Table 1: National Mandatory Baseline BNG Information

Information required	Description	
Would the planning permission, if granted, be subject to the biodiversity gain condition?	Yes – meets criteria of a major development.	
Pre-development biodiversity value of the on-Site habitat on the date of application	Habitats	4.50
	Hedgerows	0.10
Publication date of the biodiversity metric calculation tool used	February 2024	
Is an earlier date proposed?	No – the relevant date is the date of the planning application submission.	
Is there any evidence of habitat degradation?	No – there is no evidence of any unauthorised habitat degradation since the statutory cut-off date of 30 January 2020.	
Is there any irreplaceable habitat on Site?	No – there is no irreplaceable habitat within the Site boundary.	
Plan of on-Site habitat on the date of the application (or earlier date)	Refer to Figure 1 .	

2.2 'Significant' Net Gain

Based on the Proposed Landscape Plan (ref: GL2113 01D Landscape Proposals), the following 'significant' on-site habitat enhancements, as defined by Government guidance, are predicted as detailed on **Figure 2**:

-  **Habitats of medium or higher distinctiveness:** individual trees (all medium distinctiveness) and other neutral grassland proposed.

It is anticipated that a legal agreement and a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will be required to secure and maintain 'significant' on-site habitat enhancements for 30 years. This will be required via a pre-commencement planning condition.

2.3 Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

The biodiversity gain hierarchy has been followed during the design process as per **Table 2**.

Table 2: Application of the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

Step in the hierarchy	Application
<i>First, in relation to onsite habitats which have a medium, high and very high distinctiveness, the avoidance of adverse effects from the development and, if they cannot be avoided, the mitigation of those effects</i>	The majority of the site is low distinctiveness habitat, though some medium distinctiveness bramble scrub and urban trees are also present and require removal to facilitate the development. Mitigation will be provided in the form of replacement tree planting on a like for like or better basis, with low and high distinctiveness grassland to mitigate the loss of these habitats on Site. Off-site units have been sought for these habitats where this has not been adequately compensated on-site due to constraints with space and layout.
<i>Then, in relation to all onsite habitats which are adversely affected by the development, the adverse effect should be compensated by prioritising in order, where possible, the enhancement of existing onsite habitats, creation of new onsite habitats, allocation of registered offsite gains and finally the purchase of biodiversity credits</i>	As most habitat will be removed (excluding some trees) there is no opportunity to enhance on Site habitats in order to compensate the loss of lower distinctiveness habitats. On-site habitat creation and off-site gains therefore be used.

3 BNG Assessment Summary

A baseline and indicative post-development BNG assessment was undertaken using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (released in February 2024) following current guidance (Defra 2024). Further detail on the methodology is provided in **Appendix 1**.

The on-site baseline and indicative post-development BNG position are demonstrated in **Table 3**. The indicative assessment indicates that a minimum 10% net gain is not achievable on-site. It is anticipated that the required number of habitat units will be delivered through off-site habitat creation and enhancement.

Full details of the calculations including condition assessment criteria are provided in the Statutory Metric Calculation tool (ref: 2156-SBM-AG) provided separately. Onsite baseline and indicative post-development BNG plans and offsite baseline and indicative post-development BNG plans are presented in **Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4**.

Table 3: Summary of on-Site BNG Metric Assessment

Unit Type	Onsite Baseline Units	Onsite Post-development Units	Offsite Baseline Units	Offsite Post-development Units	Combined Net Unit Change	Combined % Change
Habitat	4.50	1.65	4.22	7.60	+ 0.53	+ 11.75%
Hedgerow/ Linear	0.10	0.13	0.74	0.74	+ 0.03	+ 30.04%

4 References

Defra (2024a) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide February 2024. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>.

Defra (2024b) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology February 2024. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>.

JNCC (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit*. JNCC, Peterborough, ISBN 0 86139 636 7.

Natural England (2023) The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Technical Annex 2 – Technical Information. Natural England Joint Publication JP039.

UKHab Ltd (2023) *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*. Available from: <https://www.ukhab.org>.



Legend:

- Site Boundary
- Individual trees
- Line of Trees
- X 17 - Ruderal/ephemeral
- g4 - Modified grassland
- h3d - Bramble scrub
- u1b - Developed land, sealed surface
- u1b6 - Other developed land



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Figure 1:
UK Habitats Survey- on site

Project:
Land at Old Sarum, Salisbury

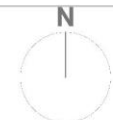
Client:
Persimmon Wessex

Date:
23/7/2024

Ref:
2156-BNG-F1

Drawn:
LT

Revision:
-





Legend:

- Site Boundary
- Introduced shrub
- Attenuation pond
- Other neutral grassland
- Modified grassland
- Vegetated gardens
- Developed land / sealed surface
- Buildings
- Ornamental Hedgerow
- Line of Trees
- Individual trees - Post-development
- Individual trees - retained

0 10 20 30 40 m

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Figure 2:
Post-Development BNG Plan- on site

Project:
Land at Old Sarum, Salisbury

Client:
Persimmon Wessex

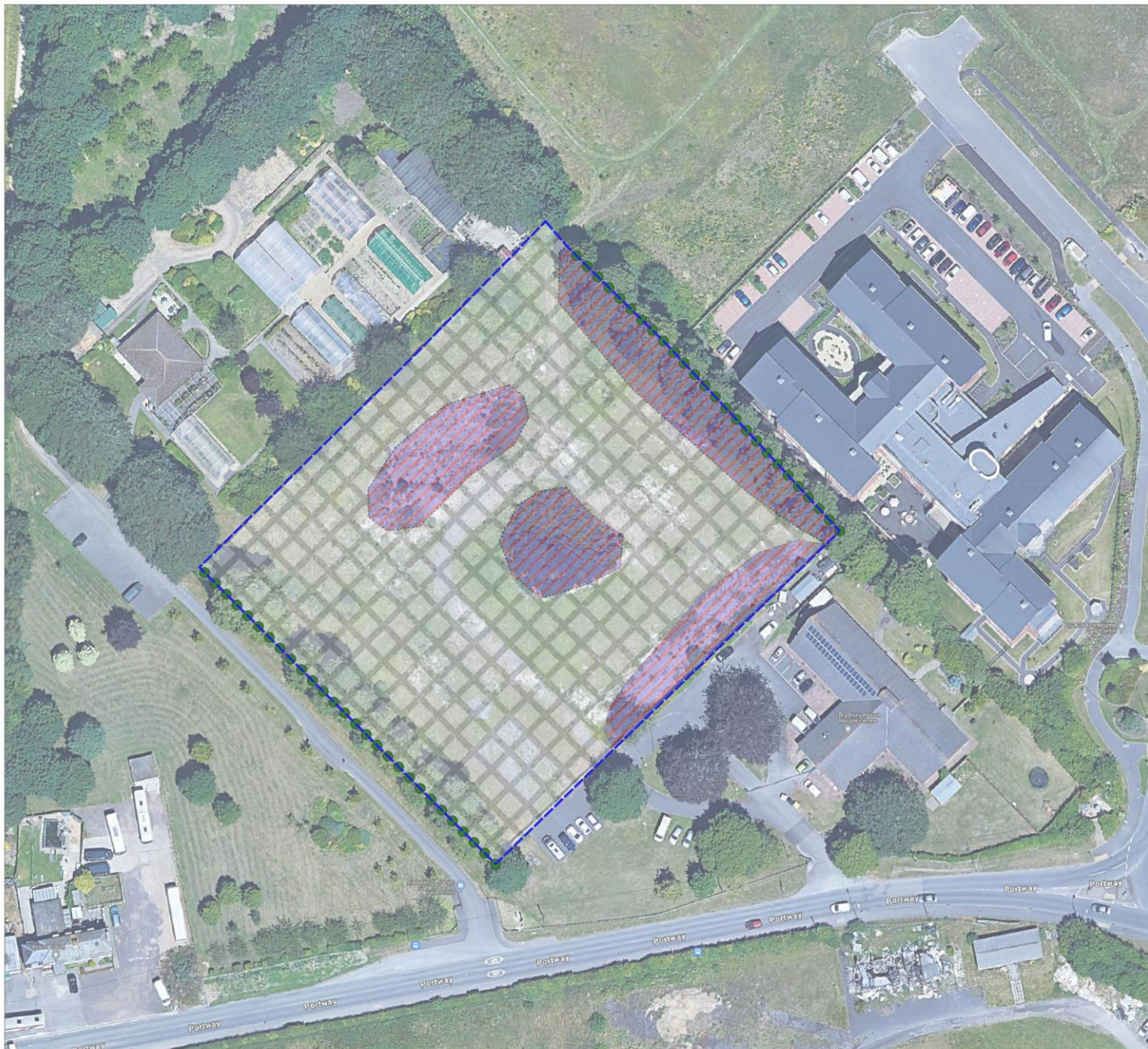
Date:
23/7/2024

Drawn:
AG

Ref:
2156-BNG-F2

Revision:
1





Legend:

Wider Survey Area

Tall forbs

h3h Mixed scrub

Line of trees

0 10 20 30 40 m

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Figure 3:
UK Habitats Survey - off site

Project:
Land at Old Sarum, Salisbury

Client:
Persimmon Severn Valley

Date:
23/7/2024

Drawn:
LT

Ref:
2156-BNG-3

Revision:



Legend:

- Wider Survey Area
- Line of Trees
- g3c - Other neutral grassland
- h3h Mixed scrub (retained and enhanced)



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Figure 4:
Post-Development BNG Plan- off site

Project:
Land at Old Sarum, Salisbury

Client:
Persimmon Severn Valley

Date:
23/7/2024

Drawn:
LT

Ref:
2156-BNG-F4

Revision:



Appendix 1 – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Methodology

Site Survey and Condition Assessment

The Site was surveyed by Lindsay Taylor BSc MSc ACIEEM and Ella Bond BSc on 24 October 2023. The offsite area was surveyed by Anna Galvin BSc MSc on 14th November 2023.

All habitats were identified, described and mapped during the field survey in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) (Butcher et al. 2020) for area habitats and Biodiversity Metric 4.0 classifications for hedgerows (Natural England, 2023a), with other linear and point features mapped using Phase 1 Habitat Survey symbology (JNCC 2010). Secondary UKHab codes have not been mapped but are described within the text.

Habitat condition was assessed following Biodiversity Metric 4.0 condition assessment criteria (Natural England, 2024). Any habitats (e.g. traditional orchard) with no appropriate primary habitat label were assigned a secondary habitat code. Other secondary UKHab codes were recorded where relevant, although they are described qualitatively within this report for ease of reading.

Biodiversity Metric Methodology

Following the adoption of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and associated condition assessment sheets in February 2024, the data collected during the site visit was transposed from Version 4.0 to the Statutory versions. The baseline BNG assessment was therefore undertaken as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Defra 2024a).

The Site was divided up into distinct habitat parcels and linear features based on UKHab and Statutory Biodiversity Metric classifications and measured accordingly using the QGIS mapping tool. Where appropriate, individual trees that have been included within the metric calculations are represented using point symbols superimposed over area habitats. Their area has been calculated and included within the metric as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Defra 2024a). All condition criteria information has been included in the User Comments of the baseline tab for all habitats for which condition.

The area of each habitat to be created, retained, and/or enhanced, as measured from the Landscape Plan in QGIS, was entered into the metric. These were then each given an appropriate target condition and strategic significance score.

The baseline BNG plan is shown in **Figure 1 and 3** and the indicative post-development BNG plan is shown in **Figure 2 and 4**.

Strategic Significance

The strategic significance score represents the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type and is considered separately for each individual habitat. The value is determined by referring to the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Where this has not yet been published, LPA biodiversity and green infrastructure strategies that apply to the site have been referred to. Due to the Site and habitats not being located within an area that has formerly been identified in a local strategy, all habitats were considered to have **Low** strategic significance.

Biodiversity Metric Principles

The Biodiversity Metric Principles have informed the assessment as per **Table 1.1**:

Table 1.1: Application of the Biodiversity Metric Principles

Principle	Application
<i>Principle 1 - The metric assessment should be completed by a competent person</i>	The metric was completed by an ecologist trained and experienced in the use of the metric.
<i>Principle 2 - The use of this biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirements. This includes consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands</i>	All other legislative and policy requirements have been met. See the EclA for further details (ref: 2156-EclA-LT Rev 3)
<i>Principle 3 - This biodiversity metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidance and professional codes</i>	The latest User Guide and good practice guidance (including information within Planning Practice Guidance) has been followed.
<i>Principle 4 - This biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice</i>	An EclA has been produced taking into account all other ecological considerations on site.
<i>Principle 5 - Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values</i>	An EclA has been produced taking into account all other ecological considerations on site and the requirements for species have been incorporated into the design.
<i>Principle 6 - This biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance</i>	An EclA has been produced taking into account all ecological considerations on site, including local requirements using survey and desk study data, with the metric used to show how habitat creation and enhancement is contributing to providing an uplift in biodiversity value of the Site, as required by the Environment Act.
<i>Principle 7 - Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe</i>	The habitats proposed to be enhanced/ created have been specified based on site specific circumstances, including how these will likely be utilised and managed in the future. As such a precautionary approach has been taken to suggesting habitats to be created post-development and condition assessment.
<i>Principle 8 - Created and enhanced habitats should be, where practical and reasonable, local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation</i>	All habitat creation is taking place within the development site.
<i>Principle 9 - This biodiversity metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. Proposals should aim to:</i> - maintain habitat extent - supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks - ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function	Proposed habitats have been designed to link to existing landscape features, including hedgerows, to enhance existing ecological networks. Large areas of grassland are proposed to offset area losses of this habitat and to maintain ecologically functional areas for species e.g. reptiles and bat foraging.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made to complete the calculations:

Tree size and status was estimated based on information collected during the PEA. This may need to be updated in line with detailed arboricultural information once available.

Limitations

There were no limitations associated with the site survey or baseline BNG calculations.

Off-Setting

Off-setting to be carried out within LPA boundary. Details provided in **Table 3 and Figures 3 and 4**. Habitat creation to include other neutral grassland and enhancing existing mixed scrub condition.

Website: www.ge-consulting.co.uk
Phone: 01647 253652
Email: info@ge-consulting.co.uk

GE Consulting is a trading name for
GE Consulting Services (UK) Ltd
registered number 08435536

Registered office: Unit 11A, Gidleys
Meadow Business Park, Christow,
Devon, EX6 7QB.
VAT Number 160595992

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