

EEL815 Land at Chelworth Industrial Estate – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

Elleendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by DE Planning Ltd., on behalf of their client, to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for an area of land at Braydon Lane, Chelworth Industrial Estate, Cricklade, Wiltshire, SN6 6HE ('the site'). This has been undertaken in support of a retrospective planning application to retain an area of hardstanding as car parking on the site ('the development').

Using current information on the proposed development, this assessment estimates the BNG anticipated to be achieved through the site plans and has been undertaken with reference to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool¹. This is a biodiversity accounting tool used for the purposes of calculating biodiversity net gain for a site and is based on 'biodiversity units' calculated according to the habitats present and their size, distinctiveness and condition. This enables the quantitative calculation of the predicted change in biodiversity value as a result of a development, with the objective of achieving a net gain in biodiversity.

In England, BNG is mandatory² under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

The site is located to the east of Chelworth Industrial Estate on Chelworth Road, which is located to the south and east of the site. To the west there is a residential property and to the north there is an area of agricultural grassland. At the time of undertaking a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) at the site (in June 2024), the main area was dominated by hardstanding which had been laid as a parking area on top of an agricultural field of neutral grassland which is understood to be cut annually for animal feed.

¹ [Natural England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/natural-england)

² From 12th February 2024.

There are seven Phase 1 habitat types on the site, including boundary features. The site was found to provide Low potential for protected species, with the hedgerow boundaries providing the most suitable habitat for protected species, namely nesting birds.

The post-development site habitat units have been determined using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool and this is summarised in **Table 1**. For the purposes of the BNG assessment, it has been assumed that the hardstanding is not present in order to assess the site's baseline prior to the works having been undertaken.

Table 1: Site habitat creation (post-development)

BROAD HABITAT	HABITAT TYPE	AREA (HA)	CONDITION	TOTAL HABITAT UNITS	COMMENTS
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.184118	N/A Other	0.00	Area of hardstanding created for car parking.
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.097782	Moderate	0.65	Area of species-rich grassland to be created around the hardstanding within the site.

The hedgerow present along the boundary of the site will be kept and brought into a management regime to ensure it remains healthy. In addition, 110m of new hedgerow will be planted along the norther boundary of the site.

Based on this, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool indicates that the development will result in a net gain of **45.74%** for non-linear habitats and **16.69%** for linear habitats, thus complying with local and national planning policies for biodiversity net gain.

Positive effects for biodiversity are encouraged in new developments by contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks.

Examples of additional biodiversity improvements for the development could include:

- The installation of bird and bat boxes to provide suitable nesting and roosting habitat;
- The plantation of native trees, shrubs and fruit trees to provide important resources, especially for early season pollinators, other insects and birds;
- The plantation of wildflower areas to benefit a large number of species including pollinators, small mammals, birds and other invertebrates;
- The implementation of living roofs (green, brown and blue) or green walls to provide additional food source and shelter for the local wildlife;
- The use of wildlife friendly lighting to reduce the light disturbance for the local wildlife, including bats; and/or
- The installation of ponds to provide an important resource for wildlife.