

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Former Library, 75 Bulford Road, Durrington, Wiltshire SP4 8EU

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Appendix 1 Pre-development habitat map

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1 Summary

Site	Former Library, 75 Bulford Road, Durrington, Wiltshire SP4 8EU
OS Grid Reference	SU 16043 44320
Development Proposal	To demolish a former porta-cabin library and build a replacement dwelling.
Survey Date	17 December 2025
Results	The development will result in a +27.64% net gain for habitats.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

Eclipse Ecology Ltd were commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for a proposed development at a former library, 75 Bulford Road, Durrington SP4 8EU – herein referred to as ‘the site’.

2.2 Site Location & Description

The site is located in Durrington at central OS Grid Reference SU 16043 44320. The site is c. 0.04ha and comprises a car park, a former porta-cabin library and a small isolated area of vegetation (refer to **Appendix 1**).

2.3 Development Proposal

The applicant proposes to demolish a former porta-cabin library and build a replacement dwelling (refer to **Appendix 2**).

2.4 Objective

To conduct a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment using the DEFRA statutory metric in order to demonstrate a minimum of 10% net gain of habitats and hedgerows.

2.5 Relevant Planning Policy & Legislation

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.

Mandatory BNG came into force on 12 February 2024 for all developments apart from ‘small sites.’ BNG for small sites came into force on 2 April 2024 (residential 1-9 units on a site less than one hectare, or where the number of dwellings is unknown and the site is less than 0.5 hectare; or for non-residential developments with floor space less than 1000m² or sites less than one hectare). Exceptions include developments of less than 25m² of habitat or 5m for linear habitats (hedgerows and watercourses), householder applications and small scale self-build.

The planning authority for the site is Wiltshire Council. The Council have adopted Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance as a statutory basis for planning decisions. The Council’s Biodiversity Net Gain guidance sets out the requirements for new development in Wiltshire to contribute towards biodiversity net gain where practical.

The site will therefore be assessed in accordance with the statutory requirement to provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.

3 Methodology

3.1 Assessing Strategic Significance

Baseline data was collected on ecological sites and habitats within the zone of influence of the application site, following guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). The object of this was 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 3.1**. This information 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.

Table 3.1 Information sources used to assess the strategic significance of the site

Organisation / Source	Information Sought
MAGIC	Locations and citations for all national statutory wildlife sites, including SSSIs, and all international sites including SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites within 1km of the site. Priority Habitats within 300m.
Wiltshire Council	The Wiltshire Core Strategy and associated Biodiversity Net Gain guidance.
Ordnance Survey and aerial maps	To identify potential priority habitats and ecological networks within 250m of the site.

3.2 Baseline Assessment

A baseline botanical assessment was undertaken by qualified ecologist Cassie Todd on 17th December 2025 in suitable weather conditions. The survey applied techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System. The botanical information collected was focussed on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to enable allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4, and where relevant to identify any priority habitats. The conditions of the habitats on the site were assessed in line with the technical sheets supplied alongside the DEFRA Statutory Metric.

The UK Habitat maps were digitised using QGIS. The habitat areas are given in hectares and any linear features such as hedgerows are given in km.

3.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

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.

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

- Area
- Habitat distinctiveness
- Habitat condition
- Strategic significance

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

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

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

3.4 Limitations

Access was available to the entire site and the baseline conditions reported represent those identified at the time of the survey. The survey date falls outside the optimal season for botanical work. However, the habitat descriptions and evaluations are considered to be accurate due to the common and widespread habitats recorded and the vegetation being clearly visible at the time of survey.

This assessment will remain valid for 1.5 years i.e. until June 2027; after which, the assessment should be updated if works have not commenced within this timeframe¹.

¹ In accordance with *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* (CIEEM, 2019).

4 Baseline Conditions

The results of the Ecological Assessment are presented below. Refer to **Appendix 1** for the pre-development habitat map.

4.1 Strategic Significance

The site is not part of or adjacent to any designated site or Priority Habitat, nor is it listed on any local plan, neighbourhood plan or other policy document for ecology. The site is therefore considered to be a 'location that is not in the local strategy'.

4.2 On-Site Habitats

Habitats that were recorded on the site are described below:

- **Building:** a former library
- **Sealed surface:** car park and other paved areas are present around the building
- **Sparsely vegetated ground:** an area of bare earth in the southwest corner of the site
- **Ephemeral:** a small area of low floral diversity is present in the northwest of the site
- **Modified grassland:** an area of grassland with low floral diversity that has been left unmanaged likely for several months

The table below summarises the baseline habitats, areas, condition assessment and distinctiveness.

Table 4.1 Summary of baseline habitats

Habitat	Existing Habitat Area (m ²)	Condition Assessment	Suggested Action
Building	161.88	N/A	Compensation not required
Sealed surface	172.49	N/A	Compensation not required
Sparsely vegetated ground	21.74	Poor	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required
Ephemeral	6.2	Poor	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required
Modified grassland	52.22	Moderate	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required

5 Biodiversity Net Gain Metric

The calculation has been run with the following proposals – refer to **Appendix 2** for the post-development habitat map.

Habitats to be retained / lost

- **Building:** to be lost 161.88m²
- **Sealed surface:** to be lost 172.49m²
- **Sparsely vegetated ground:** to be lost 21.74m²
- **Ephemeral:** to be lost 6.20m²
- **Modified grassland:** to be lost 52.22m²

Habitats to be created

- **Buildings:** 2 dwelling to be built 111.64m²
- **Sealed surface:** new parking area to be laid 168.11m²
- **Vegetated garden:** to be created around the dwellings and parking area 134.78m²

Calculation

The baseline and proposed map areas were compared. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculated a net change of **+27.64%** for habitat units. The full metric spreadsheet and condition sheets have been provided alongside this report for the planning authority's review. **Table 5.1** summarises the biodiversity metric results for the site.

Table 5.1 DEFRA Biodiversity statutory metric results

On-site Baseline	Habitat units	0.02
On-site post intervention	Habitat units	0.03
Total net change (%)	Habitat units	+27.64%
Trading rules satisfied	Yes/No	Yes

Appendix 1 Pre-Development Habitat Map



Appendix 2 Post-Development Habitat Map

