

0070 – Land at Longleaze Lane, Melksham

Initial BNG Note

22/01/2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The existing BNG material prepared in support of the proposed development at Land at Longleaze Lane, Melksham (11074.BiodiversityNetGain.vf1) has been reviewed and adjusted based on the amendments to the proposals provided.
- 1.2. This note seeks to briefly cover the existing situation, and highlight opportunities to further increase post-development units based on the new masterplan.

2. Baseline and Previous Metric

- 2.1. As discussed, the baseline will be maintained as per the existing consent. On this basis the site has a pre-development value of 2.53 habitat units and 0.34 hedgerow units.
- 2.2. The existing metric anticipated a post-development habitat score of 2.93 units, and a hedgerow value of 0.48 units. This met (and far exceeded) the required net gain for both habitat and hedgerow units.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.40
	Hedgerow units	0.14
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	15.76%
	Hedgerow units	41.84%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

3. Updated Proposals

- 3.1. The proposed habitat plans have been amended based on the new masterplan provided. This broadly keeps the development footprint consistent, however minor amendments are made to the car park area and the creation of a parcel of rain garden (a habitat type not present in the previous version of the calculations) is now

proposed. Elsewhere greenspace is assigned categories (native scrub/meadow grassland/lawn) on a similar basis to the previous landscape plans. The habitats underpinning the updated calculations are illustrated at Plan 1 of this note.

- 3.2. The updated plans provide a score of 2.93 habitat units. This equates to a small increase in habitat units compared to the previous assessment (0.42 / +16.88%). Whilst fewer trees are included in the updated plans, a slightly greater proportion of the greenspace is assigned to ecologically valuable habitats (mixed native scrub and species-rich grassland), with this accounting for the small increase in overall score.
- 3.3. For hedgerows, the previous assessment assumed total retention of all baseline features, and an additional 42m of native hedgerow being created. The updated calculations assume continued retention of existing features, whilst 36m of native hedgerow is proposed as illustrated on Plan 1. This results in an overall net gain of hedgerow units of +35.86%.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.42
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.12
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	16.88%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	35.86%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

4. Opportunities for BNG optimisation

Individual Trees

- 4.1. The current metric assumes the retention of four trees as before, and includes the creation of 13 additional small trees. With a target condition of 'moderate' (as per the previous metric) these provide 0.16 habitat units.
- 4.2. It is noted that the previous metric allows for more tree creation, and further small trees could be included around the development footprint. For context, the delivery of an additional eleven small trees (taking the total delivered to 24 as per the previous assessment) would increase the overall score by 5.46%.

Hedgerow

- 4.3. The hedgerow score has fallen slightly since the previous assessment. Whilst this remains far in excess of the required uplift, should a comparable score be sought

then – assuming total retention of baseline features as per the previous metric – an additional 6m of native hedgerow would be required.

Mixed Scrub

- 4.4. The existing metric assigns mixed scrub a target condition of ‘moderate’. Should additional units be targeted however there may be an opportunity to increase this to ‘good’ through the commitment to improved management practices.
- 4.5. The target condition for any given habitat is based on how many of the Condition Assessment Criteria (CACs) will be met. Three of the five CACs are required to achieve a condition of ‘moderate’, whilst all five must be met to achieve a condition of ‘good’. The table below expands on the management which would be required to achieve a pass for each criterion.

Criterion	Target description	Management actions
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range). - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species, - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>, common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i>, sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> (only in its restricted native range), or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i>, which can be up to 100% cover).	Preparation of the ground prior to habitat creation, followed by the delivery of an appropriate mix of scrub species can ensure the delivery of a diverse native parcel of scrub
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran) shrubs are all present.	Management should deliver a wide age range of specimens within the parcel (e.g. through selective cutting of areas to encourage regeneration).
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Monitoring must ensure that non-native species are not allowed to become established
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	The scrub will be adjacent to species-rich grassland, providing a well-developed interface to another botanically diverse habitat
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	Once established, management should deliver structural diversity such as clearings and glades throughout the parcels of scrub

- 4.6. Achieving a condition of 'good' for the mixed scrub would provide an additional 0.18 habitat units equating to an increase in the overall score of 7.35%, however it should be noted that this would result in an increasingly intensive management regime and greater project risk should this target condition not be met.

Remaining Greenspace

- 4.7. Due to the relatively small size of the remaining space available across the site opportunities to optimise this are limited. There is the potential for the lawn areas to be converted to a more valuable habitat type, however due to the proximity to patios and paths (and consequently the anticipating of elevated footfall) this is likely to be difficult to achieve.
- 4.8. The most straightforward opportunity to deliver additional value remains increased planting of individual trees.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The amendments to the proposed development illustrated on the new masterplan represent minor alterations, and consequently have not caused significant changes to the BNG score.
- 5.2. The updated metric shows a net gain of +16.88% in habitat units a +35.88% net gain in hedgerow units.
- 5.3. Subject to comparable landscape plans to those drafted for the previous masterplan the final BNG metric will continue to show a net gain for both habitat and hedgerow units similar to that returned by the previous scheme, and far in excess of legislative or policy requirements.

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Keys:

— Site boundary

Trees

● Proposed trees

● Retained trees

— Line of trees

Hedgerows

— Created native hedgerow

— Retained native hedgerow

— Retained amenity hedgerow

Area Habitats

■ Buildings

■ Developed land

■ Rain garden

■ Species-rich meadow grassland

■ Mixed scrub

■ Amenity lawn

■ Ornamental shrub

 **BENNU ENVIRONMENTAL**

Carrant House · Teddington · Tewkesbury · Gloucestershire · GL20 8NE
www.bennuenvironmental.com info@bennuenvironmental.com



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