

HalpinRobbins

Ecology & Environmental Services

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

New Buildings at Oakstone Farm, Bratton Road, West Ashton,
Trowbridge BA14 6AX
ST 89854 54151



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AUTHOR, QUALITY ASSURANCE & VALIDITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HalpinRobbins Limited was commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of Land at Oakstone Farm, Bratton Road, West Ashton, Trowbridge, BA13 4NJ, hereafter referred to as “The Site” support of a planning application to construct a number of small new buildings including a welfare unit and storage hut.

Proposals will result in the loss of modified grassland and bramble scrub within the site, resulting in the loss of **0.13** habitat units. The provision of an area of mixed scrub to the south of the site will provide a total of **+0.17 units** for area habitats. Overall, there is an estimated increase in biodiversity units of **+11.12%** for area habitats.

No Linear habitats or watercourse habitats are on site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Details*

HalpinRobbins Limited was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of Land at Oakstone Farm, West Ashton, Trowbridge in support of a planning application to construct a number of small new buildings including a welfare unit and storage hut.

This document is a summary of Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment carried out. The reporting lists the baseline habitats with their condition assessment together with habitat losses, habitats retained, habitats enhancement and habitats created on site.

This report has been prepared by Genevieve Labram, Senior Ecologist, ACIEEM who has eight years ecological consultancy experience and holds survey licences for bats and great crested newt and is a certified River Condition Assessment Surveyor.

2 METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

2.1 Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation was undertaken utilising The Statutory Biodiversity Metric from DEFRA. The calculation was performed by a technically competent and experienced ecologist as detailed in British Standard BS8683 – Suitably qualified person –definition in BS8683:2020.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric uses habitat features as a proxy measure for capturing the value and importance of nature. The metric takes into account the size, ecological condition, location and proximity to nearby ‘connecting’ features. The metric enables assessments to be made of the present and forecast future biodiversity value of a site.

2.1.1 Habitat Scoring

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric supplies reference documents and user guides in which to accurately evaluate and assess the different habitats on site. The methodology for the baseline and post development calculations are demonstrated in the following sections.

2.1.2 Baseline Units

To assess the quality of a habitat and therefore calculate the units scored The Statutory Biodiversity Metric utilises three scoring factors as detailed below.

2.1.3 Condition

The condition of a habitat is assessed utilising the Condition Sheets provided for each habitat type. These list positive indicators for each habitat and indicate how many of these indicators need to be present to meet certain thresholds of condition. These condition sheets can be found in The Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat condition assessment sheets with instructions tool Technical (Natural England Joint Publication, 2023).

2.1.4 Distinctiveness

The distinctiveness of each habitat (area and linear) is automatically assigned by the tool, based upon national records of the occurrence and rarity of each habitat.

2.1.5 Strategic Significance

The idea of strategic significance works at a landscape scale. It gives additional unit value to habitats that are in preferred locations for biodiversity and other environmental objectives. Strategic significance utilises published local plans and objectives to identify local priorities for targeting biodiversity and nature improvement, such as Nature Recovery Areas, Local

Biodiversity Plans, National Character Area objectives and green infrastructure strategies. The site has been considered to be within “Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy”.

Additional factors are implemented when assessing post development habitats.

- Difficulty of Creation/Enhancement
- Temporal Risk “Time to target condition”
- Spatial Risk (when offsite mitigation is necessary)

2.1.6 Existing Area Habitat (Baseline)

Habitat types were converted to UKHab classifications (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, May 2018) using the UK Habitat Classification V2 guidance tool based on the assessor’s judgment of how JNCC habitat descriptions best meet the criteria of the UK habitat classification. The methods were based on the standard methodology as detailed by UK Hab Methodology to assess the habitats present. A Habitat Plan was produced on QGIS to accurately measure the area of each habitat.

The condition assessment of each habitat parcel on site was assessed and input into the metric.

The areas of identified habitats is calculated in hectares (ha), ignoring linear features such as hedgerows or ditches (the area should be measured to the centre line of such features). The length of linear features such as hedgerows and rivers are measured separately in km.

Biodiversity units for all “area” habitats were then calculated by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. A copy of the metric is provided as part of the planning submission documents.

2.2 Personnel

The extended UK Habitat Classification Survey was undertaken by Miranda Maybank MSc BSc (Hons), Ecologist, Qualifying CIEEM, Natural England Bat Class Licence (Level 1) 2026-89122-SCI-CL17 on 8th October 2025.

Condition assessment and metric calculations were conducted by Genevieve Labram, Senior Ecologist, Qualifying CIEEM who has eight years ecological consultancy experience and holds survey licences for bats and great crested newt. Natural England Bat Class Licence 2025-85832-CL18-BAT (Level 2) 2023-11100-CL18-BAT Natural England Great Crested Newt Class Licence CL08 (Level 1) 2025-82508-SCI-CL08.

2.3 Limitations

The original Ecological Impact Assessment was conducted in January, outside of the advised survey window of May-September. An update site visit was conducted on 8th October 2025 by HalpinRobbins, just outside of the survey optimal survey window. However, given the low quality of habitats on site, and proximity to the optimal season window, the ecologists used their professional judgement to determine likely impacts and species present. Therefore, this is not considered to be a significant limitation. No other limitations were noted as part of this assessment.

3 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

3.1 UKHabs

The site is approximately 1.38ha in size and comprises the below habitat classifications:

Table 1 - UK Habitat Classifications Converted to BNG Habitat.

UK Habitat Classification	BNG Habitat
U1b – Developed land, sealed surface	Urban – Developed land, sealed surface
H3d – Bramble Scrub	Heathland and Scrub- Bramble Scrub
g4 (64) – Modified grassland (mown)	Grassland – modified grassland

A map of the baseline habitats within the site is provided at Figure 1, at Appendix A.

3.2 Significant Habitats

There are no habitats on site defined as “significant”.

3.3 Baseline Habitat Conditions

3.3.1 Urban- Developed Land, Sealed Surface

A well managed gravel/hogging trackway runs from the site access to the north to the centre of the site. No vegetation was present.

The habitat condition assessment is pre-set to “N/A- Other”.

3.3.2 Grassland – Modified Grassland

Grassland to the rear (south-west) of the site comprises an area of modified grassland, which is maintained through regular mowing to approximately 10 cm in height year-round. The grassland is dominated by frequent perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, annual meadow grass *Poa annua* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, with occasional creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, cock’s foot *Dactylis glomerata* and dock *Rumex* sp. Also present were rare occurrences of burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and white clover *Trifolium repens*. Typically 4-5 species were present per m² of grassland.

The habitat meets five of the required condition assessments for the habitat, essential criteria A and varied sward height category, this habitat is therefore assessed to be in **Poor** condition.

3.3.1 H3d- Bramble Scrub

A small area of bramble scrub is present on the eastern side of the site, comprising bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., ivy *Hedera helix*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and cotoneaster *Cotoneaster* sp.

4 ASSESSMENT OF BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Proposed habitats have been detailed in Figure 3, Appendix A. Locations are indicative.

4.1 *Lost Habitats*

The removal of 0.05ha of modified grassland and 0.01ha of bramble scrub is not anticipated to result in any significant ecological impacts but will result in a total loss of **0.13** habitat units.

4.2 *Retained Habitats*

Parts of the grassland and bramble scrub at the north-western aspect of the site will be retained, a **total of 0.24 retained units**. (Note, that invasive species cotoneaster sp., will be removed).

4.3 *Enhanced Habitats*

No on-site habitats are due to be enhanced.

4.4 *Created Habitats*

During the proposals, mixed scrub and trees will be incorporated into the development:

- Mixed scrub (0.09ha) managed in Moderate condition will **provide 0.17 habitat units** post development.
- Three new trees (planted within mixed scrub) near the pond and managed in Moderate condition will provide **0.04 habitat units** post development.

An area of 0.0411ha of hardstanding is anticipated to be present post development providing no biodiversity units.

5 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN SUMMARY

By providing mixed scrub and scattered trees in the northwest corner of the site, the proposed will result in a net increase of +0.10 units, a total increase in biodiversity units of **+11.12%** for area habitats.

Trading rules are satisfied. A copy of the headline results is presented below in Appendix B. A copy of the statutory metric has been submitted alongside this report (Document ref: 01.132.006.05_Oakstone Farm_Extension_StatBNGMetric).

A summary of the proposed retained, enhanced and lost habitats on-site and their calculated biodiversity unit value as input into the Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain assessment units is provided below in Table 1.

Table 1. On-Site Biodiversity Units.

	On site Baseline	Lost	Enhanced	Retained	Created	Net total units
Habitat (Area) Units	0.37	0.13	0.0	0.24	0.17	0.04

6 REFERENCES

HalpinRobbins Ltd (2026) Ecological Impact Assessment, Oakstone Farm – Extensions.

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

APPENDIX A – FIGURES

On following pages.



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Key:

- Ownership Boundary
- New Buildings - Suggested RLB
- Developed land: Sealed Surface
- Grassland; Modified grassland
- Scrub and Heathland: Mixed Scrub

Figure 2.

BNG Baseline Habitats
Oakstone Farm BNG update
BNG Assessment

Project No.: 01.132.006.05

Date: 04/06/2026



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Key:

- Site Boundary
- New Buildings
- Grassland: Modified Grassland
- Heathland and Scrub: Mixed Scrub
- Proposed Native Trees

Figure 3.

BNG Proposed Habitats - New Buildings
Oakstone Farm BNG update
BNG Assessment

Project No.: 01.132.006.05

Date: 07/07/2026

APPENDIX B – BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN HEADLINE RESULTS

Oakstone - New buildings

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ▲

Return to results menu

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.37	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.41	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.04	11.12%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.04	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.04	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	11.12%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.37	0.41	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓