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# **BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR NET GAIN**

Land off Fullwood Drive, Golcar, West Yorkshire

Report Reference: BG20.296

**January 2021**





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# 1 Summary

- 1.1 Where a development has an impact on biodiversity, Biodiversity Net Gain encourages developers to secure an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected. In order to determine whether there is no net loss or a net gain to biodiversity from a development project, a quantitative approach involving the use of a metric is required. In 2012, DEFRA created such a metric to quantify the impact of a development in terms of 'biodiversity units'. The UK government's 25 Year Environment Plan will require all new developments in England, delivered via the existing planning and development process to meet a mandatory improvement in biodiversity value.
- 1.2 This Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) draws upon the results of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken and reported upon previously (BG17.254, August 2017) and adds the results of biodiversity value calculations, derived using the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Biodiversity Impact Calculator (Beta Test) and based upon the detailed design proposals for the application site. An updated PEA was also undertaken in December 2020 (BG17.254), at which point the site had already be cleared. Conditions and habitats on site are based on the initial assessment from 2017. The classifications of existing habitats are presented within Appendix 1.
- 1.3 During the baseline assessment the habitats on site were evaluated as holding site value in relation to local surroundings. The site was dominated by tall ruderal herbs, with scrub and scattered trees. For the purposes of this biodiversity impact assessment, the south-eastern half of the site comprising the scattered trees was characterised as woodland. Some sections of non-native hedgerow were also present along site boundaries. Further protected species surveys were recommended in regards to foraging and commuting bats and great crested newts, with the site also being deemed to have some habitat suitability for breeding birds, badgers, and reptiles, with precautionary recommendations made for these species groups.
- 1.4 Using the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (Beta Test) provided by Natural England, the existing habitats within the application boundary were valued at 1.40 'biodiversity units'. The proposed scheme, totalling approximately 0.4ha, currently results in an overall net-loss to biodiversity of -0.57 'biodiversity units'

(-40.58%), even with the introduction of proposed enhancements. Baseline hedgerows on site were non-native, with a hedgerow unit value of 0. However, an area of native hedgerow is suggested, which would result in a net gain of 0.62 'hedgerow units' to the site.

- 1.5 The current master plan incorporates the creation of areas of amenity grassland and the introduction of urban street trees, with the remainder of the site comprising the proposed residential dwellings and access roads. Following the scoring in the metric, it is recommended that a woodland buffer zone is included in the soft landscaping designs along the southern boundary, and an enhancement area at the north-eastern corner of the site. However, even with these enhancements, the current proposed areas result in the overall -38.07% net loss within the site (Appendix 2).
- 1.6 This report was compiled following the Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development (CIEEM, 2019).

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 Brindle and Green Ltd were approached by Acumen Designers and Architects to carry out a Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA). This report provides an appraisal of the biodiversity value associated with existing habitats established during the baseline survey and assesses the impacts in terms of biodiversity loss against the proposed layout (Appendix 1) using the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Beta Test, provided by Natural England.
- 2.2 The project area is approximately 0.4ha in extent and is located within the village of Golcar, within the western outskirts of the town of Huddersfield. Residential plots border the northern and eastern site boundary, whilst the eastern and southern boundaries are bordered by woodland areas. The site is the subject of an outline planning application for the development of eight residential dwellings. Design plans are provided within Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.3 The majority of existing habitats within the site boundaries contributing to the baseline biodiversity score will be lost to facilitate the proposed development. In order to reduce the biodiversity loss, the retention and enhancement of a woodland buffer zone along the southern boundary is recommended. It is also recommended that the enhancement area at the north-western corner of the site should be included within the designs, comprising retained woodland, and introduced grassland mix (EG1, or similar) and scrub.
- 2.4 The purpose of this report is to assess the current biodiversity habitat and value of the site and determine the impact on biodiversity following development. The targets relating to net gain are to seek to ensure no net-loss as a result of the development, and preferably, a net-gain in biodiversity value. If a net gain cannot be made on-site, then off-site enhancement, financial contribution or habitat banking may be stipulated by the LPA.
- 2.5 Results and recommendations contained within this report have been prepared by an experienced ecologist and are therefore the view of Brindle & Green Limited. The results of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment are based on information provided by our client, the development proposals and our survey of the site. This report pertains to this information only.

## 3 The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Biodiversity Impact Calculator (Beta Test)

- 3.1 The biodiversity accounting system is underpinned by a metric that calculates the ecological value of both development impact and habitat restoration/creation.
- 3.2 The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Beta Test uses the national metric recommended by Defra, developed by Natural England in consultation with a range of experts. The metric is based on an assessment of habitat type and condition. Habitat types are classified into three bands of 'distinctiveness' which are: priority habitats as defined in the NERC Act 2006 (high), semi-natural habitats (medium) and managed habitats, such as arable farmland (low).
- 3.3 Compensation arrangements should be like-for-like or better, i.e. the loss of semi-natural habitats can only be compensated for through the creation of priority or other semi-natural habitats, not through creating some lesser quality habitat. 'Trading up' options allow for the loss of poor-quality habitat, such as farmland, to be compensated for with the creation of high-quality habitat.
- 3.4 The ecological value of the habitat lost to development is a function of its distinctiveness, its condition and the area lost – scores are assigned to all three variables and multiplied together to arrive at the number of units lost. To compensate for a loss, the same or more units ('conservation credits') must then be delivered through habitat creation or restoration at another site that is going to be managed for wildlife (the 'receptor' site or compensation site).
- 3.5 The number of credits delivered by the compensation receptor sites are also a function of the type, condition and area of the habitat being created or restored. But additionally, there are a further range of 'multipliers' applied to the creation of habitat because there are a number of risks to take account of – spatial, temporal and delivery.
- 3.6 Mapping and assessment**
  - 3.6.1 A phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017. The Phase 1 habitats recorded were converted to UK Habitats classification and habitat conditions were determined using the habitat descriptions within the phase 1

report. The classification of habitats and conditions follow the outline in the Natural England Technical Support document associated with the beta edition of the metric. The habitats recorded during the Phase 1 surveys can be found within Appendix 2 of this report.

3.2.2 Habitats were mapped within QGIS (Version 3.16) software to allow area calculations. The proposed scheme was overlaid and measured using the georeferencing tool.

### 3.6 **Limitations**

3.6.1 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The protected and notable species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of these species occurring on site, based upon the suitability of the habitats, known distribution of the species in the local area and any direct evidence on site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group.

3.6.2 Some habitats on site have been cleared at the time of writing. For the purposes of this assessment, the calculations are based off the habitats present at the time of the original PEA (BG17.254).

### 3.7 **Report Lifespan**

Given the transient nature of the subject we would consider the baseline survey results and biodiversity calculations contained within this report to be accurate for 2 years.

## 4 Assessment Calculator Results

### 4.1 Existing Biodiversity Value

4.1.1 The application site contains habitats of a low, medium and high distinctiveness. Baseline hedgerows were considered to be of low distinctiveness, comprising small section of non-native species-poor hedgerow.

4.1.2 Low distinctiveness habitats comprise the tall ruderal herbs covering approximately 0.16ha of the site, equating to approximately 40% of the area within the redline boundary. The Phase 1 survey identified a low species diversity within this area, dominated by Rosebay willow-herb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Therefore this habitat only provides a low biodiversity value, and subsequently the condition was considered to be poor.

4.1.2 Habitats of medium distinctiveness comprise poor quality woodland, covering approximately 0.22ha, equating to 55% of the area within the red-line boundary. This was considered poor due to the invasive species including Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) comprising more than 20% of this area. Canopy cover was also incomplete.

4.1.3 Also of medium distinctiveness were small areas of scrub and bracken, comprising the remainder of the site area. Scrub areas were dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and was therefore considered to be of a poor condition. The bracken area was also considered to be of a poor condition due being comprised of a single species.

4.1.3 Using the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Beta Test, provided by Natural England, the existing habitats within the application boundary were valued at 1.40 habitat biodiversity units. Baseline hedgerows comprised sections of non-native species-poor hedgerow, therefore, do not provide any hedgerow units.

### 4.2 Scheme Design

4.2.1 The application seeks approval for the development of eight residential dwellings, with associated landscaping incorporating residential gardens. The scheme will result in the loss of the majority of habitats within the site boundaries. Proposed habitats for the site, comprising residential gardens and

some introduced scattered trees provide some offset to the current predicted net loss to the site. In order to further offset the loss, it is recommended that a 5-metre buffer zone is created along the southern boundary to comprise an enhanced of introduced mixed scrub . We have also proposed an enhancement area to be situated at the north-eastern corner of the site, comprising retained trees, and introduced grassland and scrub.

4.2.2 The dominant habitats to be introduced will be urban vegetated gardens (approx. 0.14ha, 35% of the area) and introduced street trees (approx. 0.02ha, approx. 5% of the area) as well as the footprint of the proposed residential dwellings and hardstanding covering approximately 0.19ha (47.5%) of the area within the red line boundary. The recommended buffer zone of introduced mixed scrub, as well as a small section of retained trees within the enhancement area total an area of 0.04ha (10% of the area). The introduced scrub and grassland comprising the remainder of the proposed enhancement area comprise 0.03ha (7.5% of the area).

4.2.3 However, even with the proposed onsite enhancements, the biodiversity impact calculator recorded an overall loss to biodiversity of -0.57 'biodiversity units' (-40.58%). These scoring results are shown in Table 1 below.

4.2.4 However, the introduction of a section of native hedgerow along the western and northern boundary, would provide a net-gain of 0.62 hedgerow units to the site. A percentage increase cannot be calculated as the baseline value is 0.

**Table 1: Biodiversity Impact Assessment Score (Extracted from DEFRA matrix)**

<b>On-site baseline</b>	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.40
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>On-site post-intervention</b> <small>(Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement &amp; succession)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.83
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.62
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Off-site baseline</b>	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Off-site post-intervention</b> <small>(Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement &amp; succession)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Total net unit change</b> <small>(including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention/creation)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	<b>-0.57</b>
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.62
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Total net % change</b> <small>(including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat creation + retained habitats)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	<b>-40.58%</b>
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	Check Data
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

## 5 Evaluation

### 5.1 Development Proposals

The site is the subject of a planning application for eight residential dwellings with associated access. The initial development plans suggest that ground clearance will result in the loss of the majority of current habitats, aside from trees to be located within the proposed buffer zone and enhancement area. The current design proposals for the site are presented in Appendix 2 of this report, along with the overlay with our enhancement proposals.

5.2 Using the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Beta Test, provided by Natural England, the existing habitats within the application boundary were valued at 1.40 'biodiversity units'. The initial scheme with the current proposed habitat loss, and with the proposed enhancements, result in an overall loss to biodiversity of -0.57 'biodiversity units'. Taking into account the habitats proposed for the site, this results in an overall -40.58% loss.

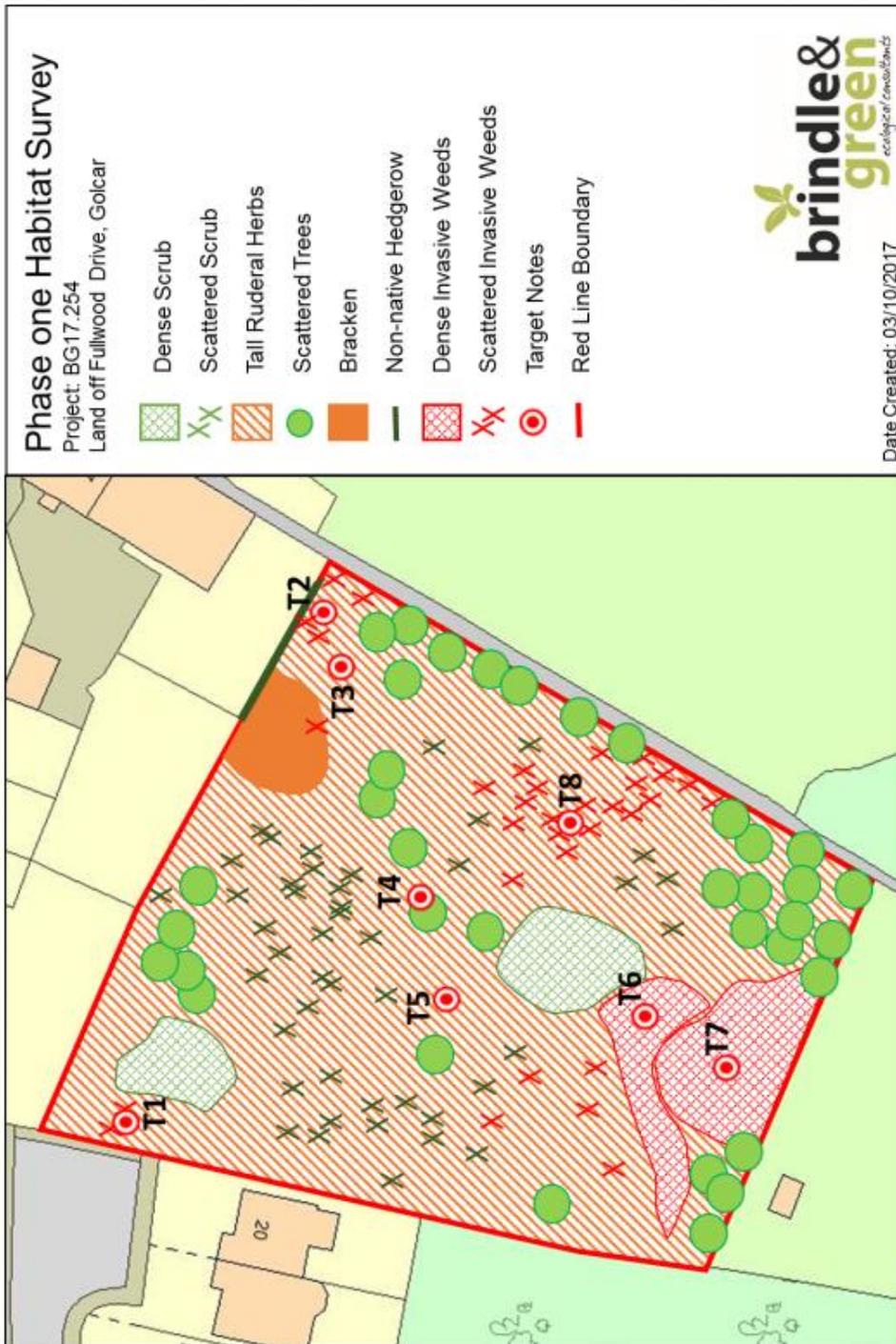
5.3 However, we also propose the introduction of a native hedgerow along the western and northern boundary, providing an introduction of 0.62 hedgerow units to the site.

5.4 Proposed habitats should be managed following a site-specific Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) as outlined in section 6 and reviewed during establishment (30 year period) to determine success.

## 6 Ecological Management Prescriptions

- 6.1 The current proposed plans result in a net loss for the site, therefore further enhancements, wither onsite or offsite, will be required for the site. The current proposed habitats, as well as enhancements, once determined, should be set out in the development plan should be secured with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan. The LEMP will include detailed management practices to extend the value of the prescriptions, in the long term.
- 6.2 All species details of introduced habitats and the section of native hedgerow will be confirmed within the LEMP.
- 6.3 In addition, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will also be secured to oversee mitigation for protected species.

# Appendix 1. Phase 1 Map and Baseline Habitats



**Baseline habitats**

Project: BG20.296 Fullwood Drive,  
Golcar

-  Species-poor hedgerow
-  Species-rich hedgerow
-  Woodland
-  Bracken
-  Scrub
-  Tall Ruderal Herbs



Drawn by: Tom Hough  
Date created: 10/02/2021

Map is for indicative purposes only, habitat patches are not scale





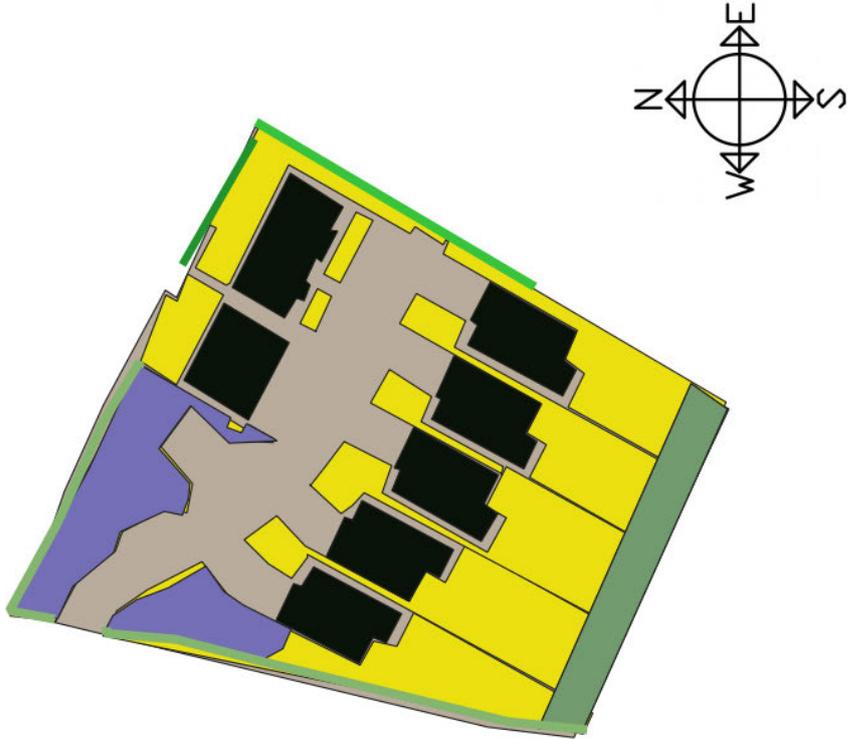
### Proposed Habitats

Project: BG20.296 Fullwood Drive,  
Golcar

- Species-poor hedgerow
- Species-poor hedgerow
- Native hedge (introduced)
- Buildings
- Enhancement area
- Buffer zone
- Amenity grassland
- Hardstanding



Drawn by: Thomas Hough  
Date created: 10/02/2021  
Map is for indicative purposes only, habitat patches are not scale



## Appendix 3. Biodiversity Calculations

<b>On-site baseline</b>	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.40
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>On-site post-intervention</b> (Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement & succession)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.83
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.62
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Off-site baseline</b>	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Off-site post-intervention</b> (Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement & succession)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Total net unit change</b> (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention/creation)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-0.57
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.62
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Total net % change</b> (including all on-site & off-site habitat creation + retained habitats)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-40.58%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	Check Data
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

<b>Net project biodiversity units</b> (including all on-site & off-site habitat)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-0.57
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.62
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
<b>Total project biodiversity % change</b> (including all On-site & Off-site Habitat Creation + Retained Habitats)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-40.58%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	Check Data
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

<b>On-site habitat retention and enhancement</b>			
	Habitats	Hedgerow	Rivers
Total site area / length	0.40	0.06	0.00
Total site units	1.40	0.00	0.00
Area / length retained	0.01	0.06	0.00
Units Retained	0.04	0.00	0.00
Area / length enhanced	0.00	0.00	0.00
Baseline units	0.00	0.00	0.00
Area / length succession	0.00		
Units succession	0.00		
Area / length lost	0.39	0.00	0.00
Units lost	1.36	0.00	0.00

<b>lost by distinctiveness</b>		
Category	Area lost (hectar)	Area lost (%)
V.High	0	
High	0	
Medium	0.23	59
Low	0.16	41
V.Low	0	

Ref	Habitats and areas			Habitat distinctiveness		Habitat condition		Ecological connectivity			Strategic significance			Suggested action to address habitat losses	Ecological baseline Total habitat units
	Broad Habitat	Habitat type	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Ecological connectivity	Connectivity	Connectivity multiplier	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position multiplier		
1	Sparsely vegetated land	Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/Ephemeral	0.16	Low	2	Poor	1	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	0.35
2	Heathland and shrub	Heathland and shrub - Bramble scrub	0.01	Medium	4	Poor	1	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required	0.04
3	Grassland	Grassland - Bracken	0.01	Medium	4	Poor	1	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required	0.04
4	Woodland and forest	Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved	0.22	Medium	4	Poor	1	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required	0.37
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															
10															
<b>Total site area ha</b>			<b>0.40</b>											<b>Total Site baseline</b>	<b>1.40</b>

Retention category biodiversity value							
Area retained	Area enhanced	Area succession	Disturbance units retained	Disturbance units lost	Disturbance units successful	Area lost	Units lost
0			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.35
0			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.04
0			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.04
0.01	0		0.04	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.32
<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>1.36</b>

Baseline ref	UK Habitats - existing habitats			Habitat distinctiveness		Habitat condition		Ecological connectivity			Strategic significance			Suggested action to address habitat	Ecological Hedgerow units
	Hedge number	Hedgerow type	length KM	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Ecological connectivity	Connectivity	Connectivity multiplier	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position multiplier		
1	1	Hedge Ornamental Non Native	0.02	V.Low	0	Good	3	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0
2	2	Hedge Ornamental Non Native	0.04	V.Low	0	Good	3	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
<b>Total Site length/KM</b>			<b>0.06</b>											<b>Total site length</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Retention category biodiversity value					
Length retained	Length enhanced	Units retained	Units enhanced	Length lost	Units lost
0.02		0	0	0	0
0.04		0	0	0	0
<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Post development/ post intervention habitats																
Proposed habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Ecological connectivity			Strategic significance			Temporal multiplier		Difficulty multipliers		Habitat units delivered
						Ecological connectivity	Connectivity	Connectivity multiplier	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position	Time to target condition/years	Time to target multiplier	Difficulty of creation	Difficulty of creation	
Urban - Vegetated garden	0.14	Low	2	Poor	1	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	1	0.965	Low	1	0.30
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	0.08	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	0	1.000	Low	1	0.00
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	0.11	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	0	1.000	Low	1	0.00
Urban - Street Tree	0.02	Low	2	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	27	0.382	Low	1	0.03
Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub	0.02	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	3	0.899	Low	1	0.16
Grassland - Other neutral grassland	0.01	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	10	0.700	Low	1	0.06
Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub	0.03	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	3	0.899	Low	1	0.24
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0.39</b>															<b>0.79</b>

Baseline ref	New hedge numb	Proposed habitats			Habitat distinctiveness		Habitat condition		Ecological connectivity		Strategic significance		Temporal multiplier		Hedge units delivered
		Habitat type	Length km	Distinctiveness	Condition	Ecological connectivity	Strategic significance	Time to target condition/years							
1		Native Species Rich Hedgerow	0.1	Medium	Good	Medium	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	10	0.62						
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
<b>Creation Length/KM</b>			<b>0.10</b>						<b>0.62</b>						