

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.  
Ecological Consultants.**

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**CARTWORTH ROAD, HOLMFIRTH.**

**OS REF: SE 14353 07592.**

**BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.**

**Ref No: 240721.**

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> October 20204.**

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# **1. INTRODUCTION.**

1.1. An application is being prepared for the construction of a new agricultural building off Cartworth Road, Holmfirth.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has therefore been commissioned to carry out a biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment of the site.

1.3. An initial baseline survey of the site was carried out on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This report outlines the findings of that survey and includes a final assessment based on the baseline results and the landscaping plan provided.

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## **2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.**

2.1. This report was prepared in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.2. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.3. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the primary habitat types throughout the survey area. All primary habitats are accompanied by secondary codes which are used to add further specific details where necessary. Each primary habitat and unique set off secondary codes will be shown individually in the appended annotated map.

2.4. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.5. This survey was carried out by Arabella Catlow BSc (Hons) ACIEEM. Since 2014 Arabella has had professional experience working as an ecological consultant carrying out a wide variety of surveys including phase 1 habitat surveys, preliminary ecological appraisals and species-specific surveys. In addition to her degree in Zoology, Arabella has successfully completed a number of courses run by CIEEM, the FSC and BCT on both protected species and botanical identification. Arabella has experience of Biodiversity Net Gain and is accredited to undertake river condition assessments utilising the MoRPh methodology. Furthermore, she holds Natural England licence for bats and great crested newts.

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### **3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.**

#### **3.1. Data Search Results.**

3.1.1. An online search for publicly available information on designated sites was carried out. The findings are outlined below.

3.1.2. The site falls within the SSSI IRZ (Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone) for Dark Peak SSSI, however, the development does not require consultation with Natural England as it does not fall within the criteria necessitating this.

3.1.3. No other statutory designated site were located within the 2km search area.

#### **3.2. The Surveyed Area**

3.2.1. The site is located to the south of the village of Holmfirth within a rural setting on the hillside to the west of the River Ribble. The land surrounding the site is used agriculturally.

3.2.2. The aerial map shows the location of the survey area, indicated by the yellow box, and the surrounding area.



3.2.3. The survey area comprised the plot of land on which the agricultural building is to be built, the route to be used to access the designated building area, and the area that is to be used as the biodiversity offset area.

3.2.4. The aerial image below shows the approximate location of the area subject to the planning application, within the red line boundary, while the blue area denotes the area to be used as the offset area.



### 3.3. Habitat descriptions

3.3.1. Appendix I of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are listed below, followed by descriptions of each habitat and a baseline condition assessment (attached separately) of the habitat for the purpose of the Biodiversity Net Gain baseline assessment of the site: -

- g3c other neutral grassland
- g3c6 lolium-cynosurus neutral grassland
- u1e built linear feature

#### 3.3.2. *g3c Other neutral grassland.*

*Secondary codes: 81 ruderal of ephemeral, 109 hay, 839 bare ground track*

3.3.2.1. There were three distinct areas of other neutral grassland present within the red line boundary. These were: the unmown grassland within the footprint of the proposed

building; the rank grassland on the small embankment; and the worn grassland along the access track.

3.3.2.2. The grassland within the proposed building footprint was dominated by cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), with other grass species such as perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Timothy (*Phleum pratense*). Some forbs were also found to be present including broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), and white clover (*Trifolium repens*). This area was found to be in poor condition. This area of grassland has, to date, been used for hay (109) in the same manner as the mown hay field adjacent to the east of this habitat (the hay meadow was not included within this report as it lies outside both the red and blue line boundary).



3.3.2.3. The embankment immediately adjacent to the building footprint was found to be unmanaged and more rank with more ruderal vegetation being present (81). A greater number of forb species were present within this area of that within the that of the building footprint, these included: nettle (*Urtica dioica*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), and hawkbit species (*Leontodon* sp.). This area of grassland was found to be in poor condition.



3.3.2.4. The grass along the access route was found to have a short sward height and was subject to regular disturbance. A compacted bare ground track (839) was found to be present; this did not have any vegetation growing on it. Species found to be present, including in between the tyre tracks, included scarlet pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), perennial ryegrass, white clover, ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Timothy, and creeping buttercup. This area of grassland was found to be in poor condition.

### **3.3.3. g3c6 *Lolium-cynosurus* neutral grassland.**

*Secondary codes: 32 scattered trees, 101 cattle grazed.*



3.3.3.1. The grassed east facing embankment that forms the off-site offset area, as denoted by the blue line, was grazed by cattle (101) in the autumn of each year. A number of grass species were found to be present including perennial ryegrass, cock'-foot, common bent, Yorkshire fog, red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), tufted hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), and sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). Numerous forbs were also recorded, these included white clover, meadow buttercup, lesser hawkbit (*Leontodon saxatilis*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), marsh thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), pearlwort species (*Sagina* sp.), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and mouse-eared hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*). Foxgloves were also noted within this habitat but only along the western edge of this habitat with the derelict dry-stone wall (described below). Overall, this grassland was found to be in moderate condition.

3.3.3.2. Within this habitat were four individual scattered trees (32), these were all semi-mature hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) in a moderate condition.

#### **3.3.4. u1e Built linear feature.**

*Secondary codes: 114 dry stone wall, 612 fence*



3.3.4.1. A dry stone wall was found to be present to the west of the offset area at the top of the embankment above this sat a low post and wire fence. This separates the g3c6

lolium-cynosurus neutral grassland from the hay meadow which lies between it and the site of the new agricultural building.

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## 4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

### 4.1. Baseline Biodiversity Value.

The below table shows the baseline biodiversity value for the site from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. This is designed to give an indication of the biodiversity value of the site prior to any development. The baseline for the red line boundary, on-site habitats, was calculated at 0.42 habitat units. Of the blue line boundary, off-site habitats, the minimum area to achieve the required gain was included in the calculations (0.1ha) the baseline value of which was calculated at 0.93 as demonstrated in the tables below.

*On site:*

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Other neutral grassland	0.035	Medium	Moderate	0.28
Other neural grassland	0.035	Medium	Poor	0.14
Other neutral grassland	0.001	Medium	Poor	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.07</b>			<b>0.42</b>

*Off site:*

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Other neutral grassland	0.1	Medium	Moderate	0.80
Rural tree	0.016	Medium	Moderate	0.13
<b>Total area (excluding individual trees)</b>	<b>0.12</b>			<b>0.93</b>

### 4.2. Post Development Intervention and Habitat Creation.

4.2.1. The below shows the biodiversity units that will be delivered on site post development.

4.2.2. No landscaping plan was provided, however, discussion with the client revealed that all habitats within the red line planning boundary are to be returned to the state they were found to be in at the time of the survey with the exception of the building footprint itself which will become developed land sealed surface. The client was happy to make required habitat enhancements within the offsite, blue line, area. This will entail increasing the number of species present to more than 10 per m<sup>2</sup> within 0.1ha.

4.2.3. The proposals will deliver 0.21 habitat units within the red line boundary, on site habitats. Of the require 0.1ha within the blue line, off site, boundary 0.93 habitat units can be delivered as demonstrated in the tables below.

*On site:*

<b>Habitat Type</b>	<b>Extent (ha)</b>	<b>Distinctiveness</b>	<b>Condition Assessment</b>	<b>Biodiversity Units</b>	<b>Retained/ Created/ Enhanced</b>
Developed land; sealed surface	0.019	V.low	N/A - Other	0.00	Created
Other neutral grassland	0.015	Medium	Poor	0.06	Created
Other neural grassland	0.035	Medium	Poor	0.14	Retained
Other neutral grassland	0.001	Medium	Poor	0.01	Retained
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.07</b>			<b>0.21</b>	

*Off site:*

<b>Habitat Type</b>	<b>Extent (ha)</b>	<b>Distinctiveness</b>	<b>Condition Assessment</b>	<b>Biodiversity Units</b>	<b>Retained/ Created/ Enhanced</b>
Other neutral grassland	0.1	Medium	Good	0.80	Enhanced
Rural Tree	0.016	Medium	Moderate	0.13	Retained
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.12</b>			<b>0.93</b>	

### 4.3. Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations.

Based on the figures above, there will be a loss of 0.22 habitat Bu (52.86%) for the on-site habitats within the red line boundary. However, there will be a gain of 0.28 habitat BU within the blue line boundary, off site habitats. This will result in an overall gain of up to 0.06 habitat Bu (13.20%) and the Trading Standards being met.

FINAL RESULTS		
<b>Total net unit change</b> <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.06
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
<b>Total net % change</b> <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	13.20%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
<b>Trading rules satisfied?</b>	Yes ✓	

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## 5. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. Overall, there is the potential for a 0.06 habitat Bu (13.20%) increase and the trading rules will have been satisfied. The statutory requirements for biodiversity net gain can be met.

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Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

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# APPENDIX I. BASELINE HABITATS MAP



Site: Cartworth Road, Holmfirth  
 Reference: 240721

Date: 08.10.2024  
 Produced by: Arabella



## APPENDIX II. POST DEVELOPMENT HABITATS MAP.



Site: Cartworth Road, Holmfirth

Date: 09.10.2024

Reference: 240721

Produced by: Arabella

