19th February 2025

File Note: BNG at site Formerly the Deighton Centre, Deighton Road, Huddersfield HD2 1JP

Ref: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) version 5.0 reporting file note

Site address: Formerly the Deighton Centre, Deighton Road, Huddersfield HD2 1JP

National Grid Reference: Centred on SE 1591 1956

Site area: 1.97765ha BNG area assessed.

Recipients: Frank Shaw Associates

Record of activity

- **Background**

  Arbtech consulting Ltd were instructed by Frank Shaw Associates to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) evaluation of a development on the site, subject to a planning application with Kirkless Council for:

  - The construction of a school.

- **Purpose of survey**

  The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear (para 170) that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by; minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures".

  Paragraph 174 requires the promotion of "the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity".

  Proposals for net gain should be clearly recorded and reported through use of an appropriate metric such as the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.0. Natural England advise that any net gain should be fully secured and funded for the lifetime of the development.

Therefore, the purpose of this survey report is to provide an evaluation of the proposed plans compared to the ecological baseline, and to report any net gain (or loss) to biodiversity using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.0 scheme.

- **Surveyor and date of survey**

  This survey report was updated by Harry Brindle, BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist in response to an updated Tree Retention Plan. The original BNG was carried out by Craig Williams, BSc (Hons), MSc, DIC, MRSB of Arbtech Consulting Ltd. iteratively, with the relevant version on 26th February 2024. A previous preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) is used as the ecological baseline and was carried out on 1st November 2022. The baseline habitat map and the current proposed soft landscaping plans are fond in appendix 1 and 2.

Summary findings

- The full results of the metric are included in the excel file:

  Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (Former Deighton Centre, HD2 1JP) v3.2

  This highlights that the current change in the biodiversity habitat metric is:

  - +33.19% in habitat units
  - +100% in linear units (default when the baseline is 0)

- The results indicate a net gain in habitat area units (1.26 units), and a net gain in linear units (0.36 units). This is mainly contributed to replacement of part of the baseline grassland and some woodland and scrub areas with the proposed school site of buildings, sealed and permeable surfaces, ornamental planting and grass areas, but compensated for with enhanced retained woodland condition on site, native scrub planting, proposed trees and the proposed planting of new hedgerows. Relevant enhanced/created habitat condition requirements are outlined below:

Enhanced broadleaved woodland (poor to moderate condition)

0.31907ha on site (within redline).

Total scores of at least 26 up to 32 from the below matrix

		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)
A	**Age distribution of trees**	Three age-classes[1] present.	Two age-classes[1] present.	One age-class[1] present.
B	**Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage**	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland[2].	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland[2].	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland[2].
C	**Invasive plant species**	No invasive species[3] present in woodland.	Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* or cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* not present, other invasive species[3] <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species[3] >10% cover.
D	**Number of native tree species**	Five or more native tree or shrub species[4] found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species[4] found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species[4] across woodland parcel.
E	**Cover of native tree and shrub species**	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native[5].	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native[5].	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native[5].

F	**Open space within woodland**	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6]. Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted[7].	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6].	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6]. But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category[7].
G	**Woodland regeneration**	All three classes present in woodland[8]; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland[8].	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland[8].
H	**Tree health**	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback[9].	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present[9].	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present[9].
I	**Vegetation and ground flora**	Recognisable NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present.
J	**Woodland vertical structure**	Three or more storeys across all survey plots or a complex woodland[11].	Two storeys across all survey plots[11].	One or less storey across all survey plots[11].

K	**Veteran trees**	Two or more veteran trees[12] per hectare.	One veteran tree[12] per hectare.	No veteran trees[12] present in woodland.
L	**Amount of deadwood**	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].
M	**Woodland disturbance**	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident[14].	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground[14].	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground[14].

Example:

To achieve a moderate condition score (26-32), targeted woodland enhancements should focus on increasing native tree and scrub cover, particularly in areas where density is low, such as the northeast of the site. This can be achieved through supplementary planting of appropriate native species. Additionally, enhancing the woodland's ground flora is recommended by introducing a suitable seed mix, such as "EW1 Woodland Mixture," to promote recognisable NVC plant communities. Furthermore, the removal of invasive species, including Rhododendron and Cherry Laurel, should be maintained across the woodland and monitored for reoccurrences.

To maintain the condition of the woodland, efforts should be made to prevent ground damage and avoid nutrient enrichment from human activities such as excessive foot traffic, dumping of organic material, or recreational activities. Regular monitoring for signs of tree disease and crown dieback is also advised, allowing for early intervention if necessary to sustain tree health and prevent further decline.

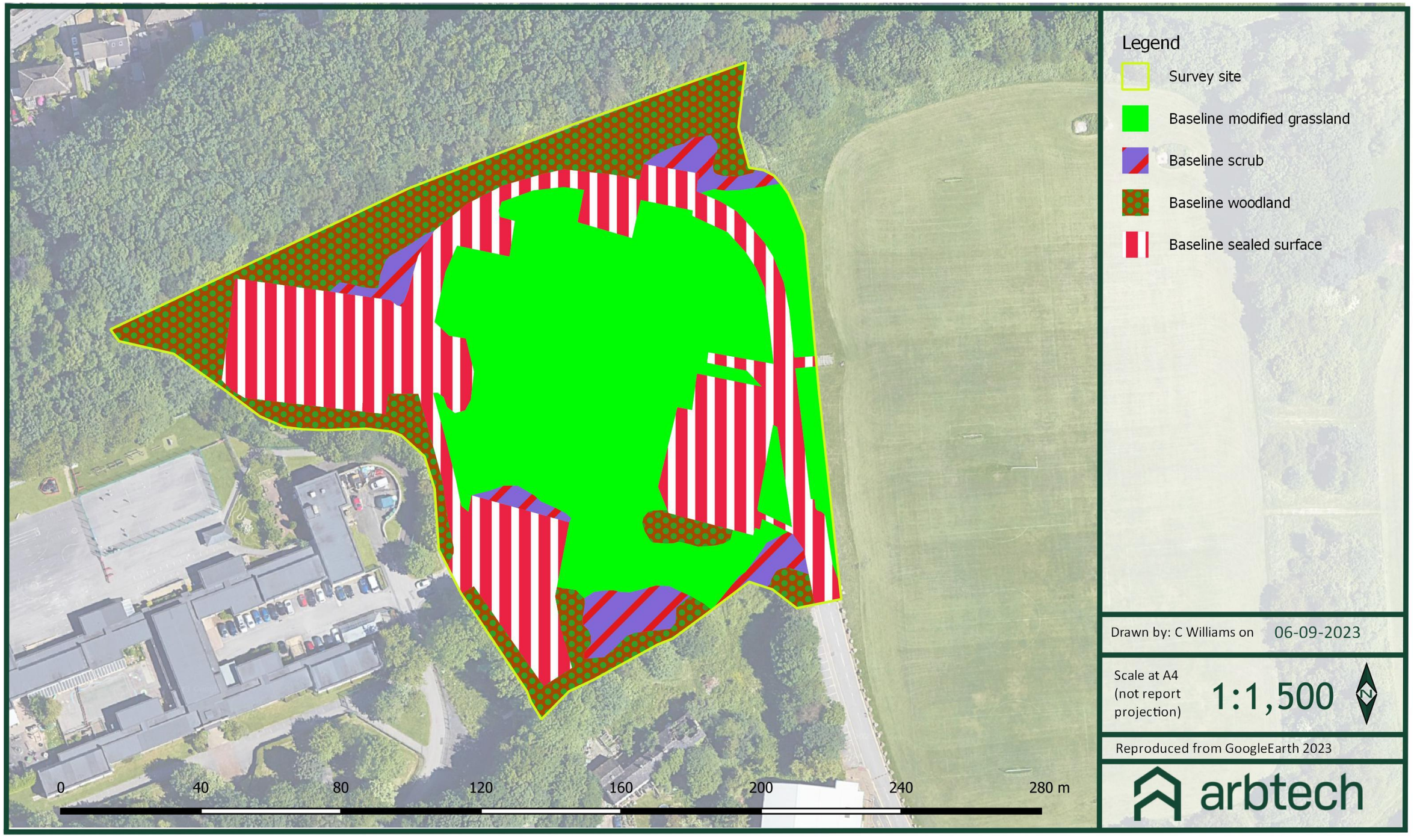
Discussion

- The creation and management of the habitats on site to the appropriate condition would need to be secured for at least 30 years - linked to the application through a planning obligation in Section 106 (S106) agreement.

- <u>Design statement</u>

  This report contains recommendations on measures for achieving BNG. These recommendations do not constitute a design for BNG. In submitting these recommendations, Arbtech Consulting has no Design Liability associated with these recommendations for BNG. The strategy sets out the criteria which the landscape team can use to design the creation and management of the site.

Appendix 1: Habitat baseline map



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Appendix 2: Currently proposed ecological map of the site (based on the site habitats in the metric)



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