Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Coach & Horses, Honley

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1. Introduction

1.1 Report Rationale

This report has been prepared at the request of Stephen Ingham. Eco 360 were commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment at COACH & HORSES, EASTGATE, HONLEY HD9 6PA (OS Grid Reference: SE 13983 12090). The survey effort involved both a desktop study and field survey.

The main purpose of this assessment was to identify the broad habitats (as stated in the JNCC Phase 1 Handbook) and the flora species present within the survey area, with any evidence of protected species usage and/or features of potential ecological interest also included. The field survey was carried out on the 23rd September 2025 by Mr. Ben Whyman: BSc (Hons), Ecologist.

1.2 Site Description

The site is located in the village of Honley in the metropolitan borough of Kirklees, West Yorkshire. It is situated in a semi-rural setting. In the immediate surroundings of the surveyed building, there are residential dwellings, commercial properties, amenity grassland, scattered trees and hard standing ground. The site lies adjacent to the River Holme, and within the wider landscape there are also areas of pastureland, woodland, and hedgerows, which provide linear commuting features. Given its location and surroundings, the site has the potential to support local bat and bird populations through providing commuting and foraging opportunities.

Figure 1: An aerial map showing the location of the land proposed for re-development (red line boundary) in relation to some of the local landscape.

1.3 Proposals

The proposals are for a residential development. Proposed plans can be found in Appendix B.

1.4 Scope of Report

This report aims to:

- Establish the total number of baseline and lost habitat, hedgerow, and river units at the site of the proposed scheme.
- Establish the total number habitat, hedgerow, and river units that are to be created, retained and/or enhanced under landscape and ecological mitigation proposals at the proposed works site.
- Determine whether the proposed scheme will result in a net loss, no net loss, or a net gain for biodiversity.
- Make further recommendations to gain the required 10% minimum net gain for biodiversity.

1.5 Biodiversity Net Gain Relevant Policies

The appraisal has been compiled with reference to the following relevant nature conservation legislation, planning policy and the UK Biodiversity Framework from which the protection of sites, habitats and species is derived in England. These are:

- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP)
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (2011-2020)
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021
- Environmental Act 2021
- Local policy

A full explanation of these policies can be found within **Appendix D.**

2. Methodology

Personnel

Field surveys have been undertaken by licensed ecologist/s, members of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and members of Eco 360 staff.

The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been carried out in line with CIEEM Guidelines on Good practice principles for development (2016), CIEEM A Practical Guide (2019) and BS 8683:2021 - Process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain.

Survey of Baseline Habitats and Condition

Habitat typing and condition assessments are undertaken during a Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA) or similar studies. The baseline also considers historic records for the site and local area via a desktop study desktop study (satellite imagery, previous ecological reports), as well as additional surveys to assess the presence/absence of species in certain situations. Conditions of habitats and hedgerows are assessed using the scoring systems provided in Technical Annex 1 of the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Condition Assessment Sheet.

River assessments are carried out through a MoRPH5 Pro survey and River type survey. At least one MoRPH5 is undertaken per reach on site that will be directly or indirectly impacted with a further MorPH5 undertaken upstream to record a more “natural setting” if required. This date is then processed via Cartographer to give the condition of the rivers on site.

Calculations of Baseline Habitats

Using Geographic Information Software (GIS), baseline habitats are measured in hectares (ha) using vector layer polygons. These measurements are then input into the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. Habitat condition and connectivity are then input into the calculator. The area of habitat retained is then entered into the calculation to give a final sum of baseline units and lost unit.

Each habitat has a base score of 1, this is then multiplied by the size of the habitat (ha). The habitat is then multiplied by its distinctiveness:

- Very low – 0
- Low – 2
- Medium – 4
- High – 6

The next multiplier is based on the condition of the habitat:

- N/A-other/agricultural – 0
- Poor – 1
- Fairly poor – 1.5
- Moderate – 2
- Fairly good – 2.5
- Good – 3

Calculations of Post-development Habitats

The calculation is informed by planning design, landscape plans, and proposed ecological mitigation. Plans are georeferenced into GIS and are similarly measured in hectares (ha) using vector layer polygons. These measurements are then converted into input into the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. A target condition will be assigned to each new habitat following the same scores as above. The calculator will generate a proposed time to hit this target condition and difficulty score.

3. Baseline Calculation and Proposal Impact

3.1 Baseline Habitats

The table below outlines the existing site status based on the most recent field survey.

Habitats

Habitat Type	Area (m^2)	Distinctiveness	Distinctiveness Score	Condition	Condition Score	Total Habitat Units	Baseline Units Retained	Baseline Units Enhanced	Area Habitat Lost	Units Lost
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	1,111	V. Low	0	N/A – Other	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	76.00	0.000

Linear Habitats

There are no baseline linear habitats recorded on-site.

3.2 Proposed Habitats

Habitats

Habitat Type	Area (m^2)	Target Distinctiveness	Score	Target Condition	Score	Habitat Units Delivered
Modified Grassland	76	Low	2	Moderate	2	0.0264

Linear Habitats

There are no proposed linear habitats.

3.3 Total Net Unit Change

The Net Unit change for the habitats on-site is calculated at **+0.0264 units**, which correlates to a **net gain in habitat biodiversity** from a baseline value of 0.0000 units.

The Net Unit change for the linear habitats/hedgerow units on-site is calculated at **0.0000 units**, meaning there is no net loss or gain.

The impacted habitat from the proposed works only affects sealed surfaces, which have a baseline biodiversity value of zero. The creation of 76 m² of modified grassland delivers measurable uplift.

4. Recommendations

The impacted habitat from the proposed works only affects sealed surfaces, which have a baseline biodiversity value of zero. Due to this, the proposed works are exempt from all BNG rules, and no further action is required due to the following legislation

In the UK Statutory Instruments, 2024, Number 47, Regulation 4: "The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024" the following is stated.

(1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which meets the first and second conditions.

(2) The first condition is that the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat.

(3) The second condition is that the development impacts—

(a) less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero; and

(b) less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.

(4) For the purposes of this regulation—

(a)"priority habitat" means a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;

(b)a habitat is impacted where the habitat is lost or degraded such that there is a decrease in the biodiversity value of that habitat;

(c)"linear habitat" means the types of hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric (which are measured by length (expressed in kilometres) rather than area).

This exemption can be found here:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/47/regulation/4/made

5. References

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Treweek J. et al. (2009) Scoping study for the design and use of biodiversity offsets in an English Context.

Treweek J., Butcher B., and Temple H. (2010) Biodiversity offsets: possible methods for measuring biodiversity losses and gains for use in the UK. CIEEM In Practice.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Baseline habitat map

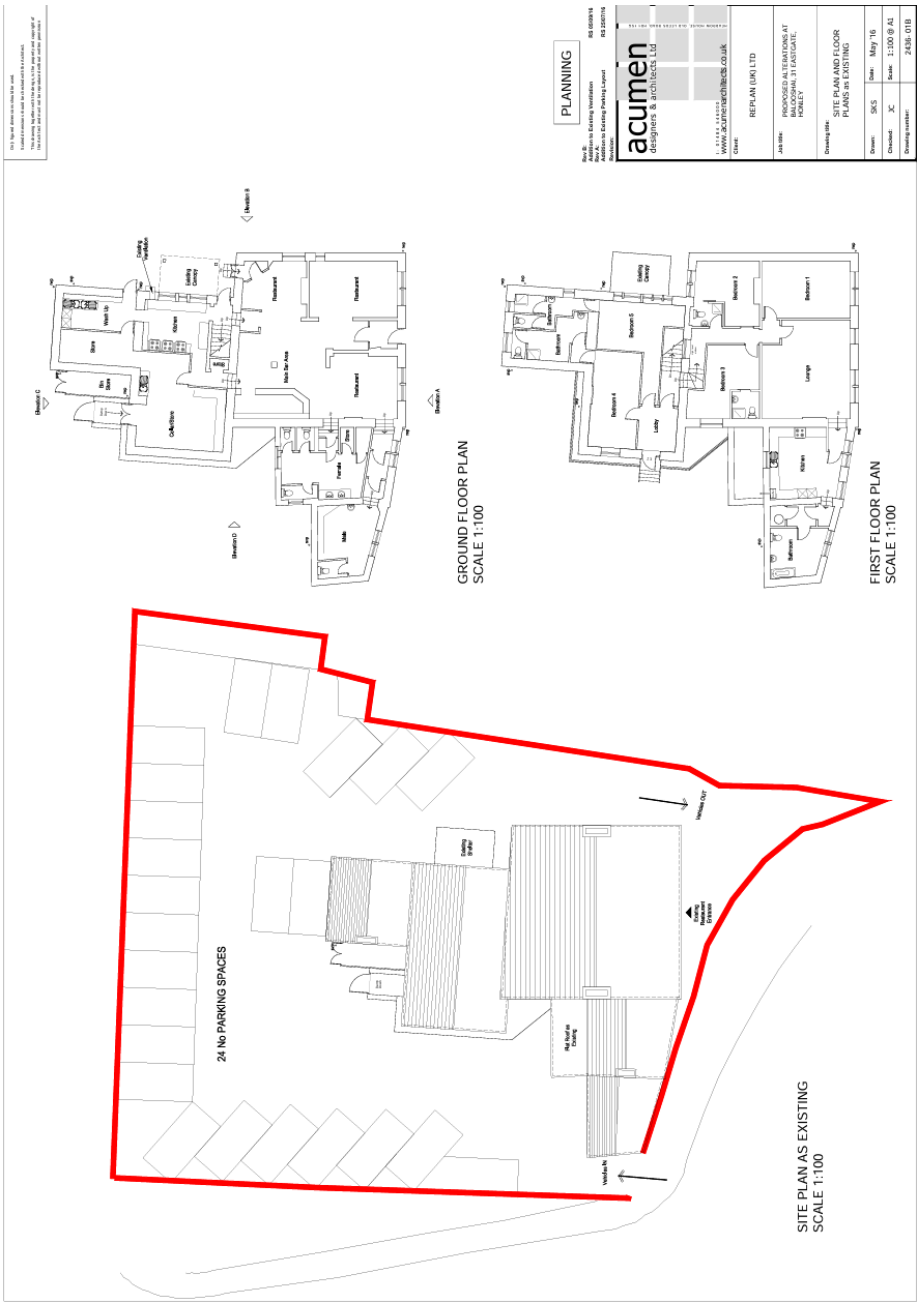
Appendix B: Proposed Site Plans

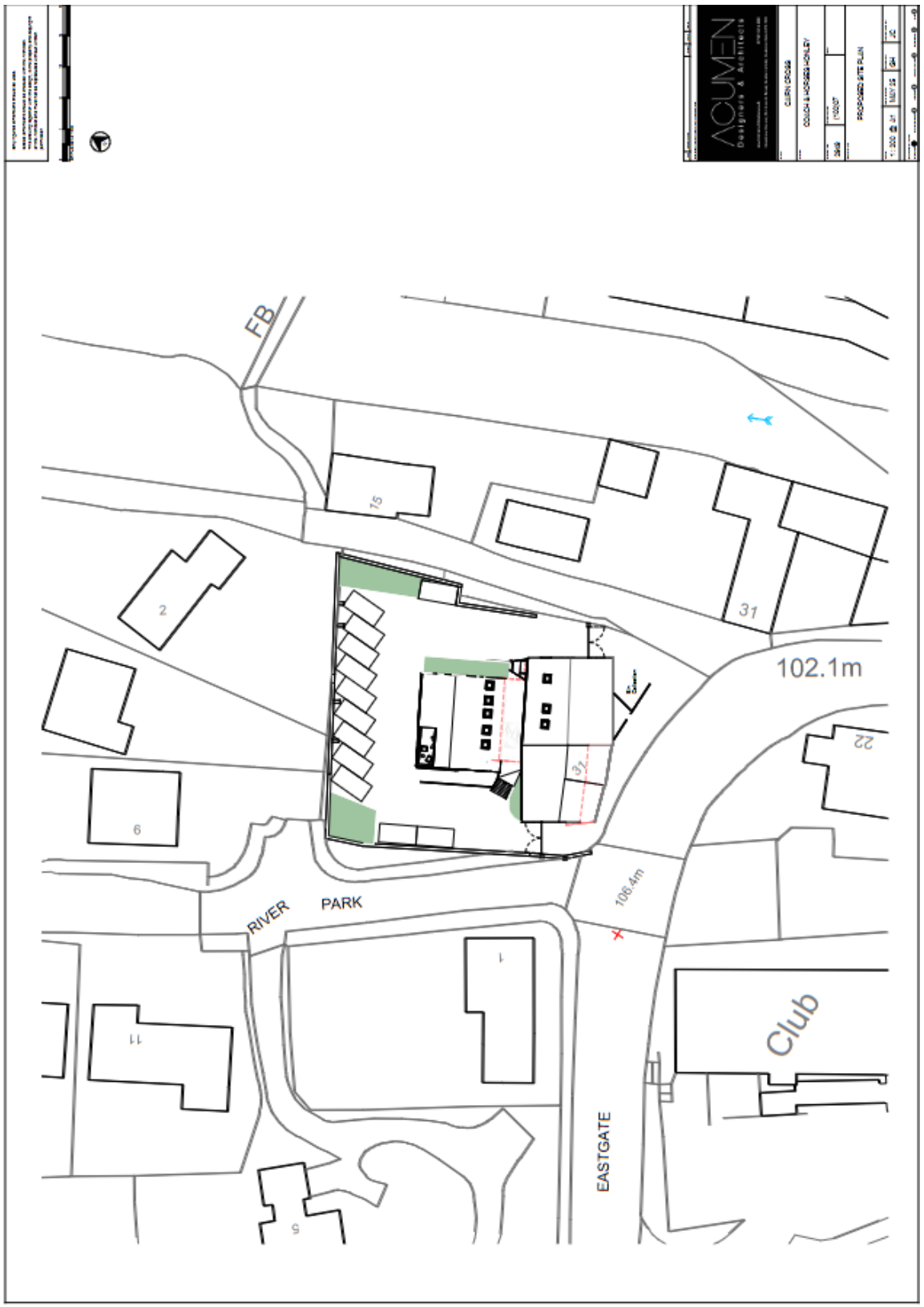
Appendix C: Proposed habitat map

Appendix D: Biodiversity Net Gain Relevant Policies

Appendix A: Baseline habitat map

Appendix B: Proposed Site Plans




FB
15
2
31
102.1m
22
6
31
RIVER
PARK
106.4m
1
11
Club
EASTGATE
5

Appendix C: Proposed habitat map

Appendix D: Biodiversity Net Gain Relevant Policies

Environmental Act 2021

Part 6 on nature and biodiversity covers all areas of biodiversity net gain across two core sections. This Act mandates that all planning meets a minimum of a 10% gain in biodiversity calculated using the appropriate Metric and that the newly created habitats are secured for at least 30 years.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

While currently not a legal obligation, biodiversity and environmental net gains are mentioned in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) within the following paragraphs (please refer to the NPPF for the full quotations):

Achieving sustainable development

Paragraph 8 Section C. "*an environmental objective – **to protect and enhance our natural,** built and historic **environment**; including making effective use of land, **improving biodiversity**, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy*."

Preparing and reviewing plans

Paragraph 32. "*Local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements. This **should demonstrate how the plan** has addressed relevant economic, social and **environmental objectives** (including **opportunities for net gains**). Significant **adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided** and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered)*."

Identifying land for homes

Paragraph 73 section C. "*consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for **net environmental gains***"

Transport infrastructure:

Paragraph 104. "*Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*
*d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for **net environmental gains.***

Planning decisions:

Paragraph 119 "*Planning decisions and planning policy should a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land … and taking opportunities to **achieve net environmental gains - such as developments that would enable new habitat creation."***

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraph 174 Section D. "***minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity****, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures*"

Habitats and biodiversity

Paragraph 179. "*To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:*

a) Identify, map and ***safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats*** *and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management,* ***enhancement, restoration or creation****;*

and b) promote ***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***."

Paragraph 180. "*When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

a) *if* ***significant harm to biodiversity*** *resulting from a development* ***cannot be avoided*** *(through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then* ***planning permission should be refused;***

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the ***loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats*** *(such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees)* ***should be refused,*** *unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;*

and d) development ***whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported;*** *while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can* ***secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*** *or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate*."

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No reliance should be made on any such comments in relation to the structural integrity of the features located on the surveyed site. All information within the report is based solely on evidence that has been found on site during the service provided. No individual opinion or inference will be made other than that of the suitably qualified ecologist appointed to the project.