10th July 2022

File Note: BNG at Land opposite Alders Meadow

Ref: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) 3.1 reporting file note

Site address: Land opposite Alders Meadow, Buxton Road, Chinley, Derbyshire, SK23 6DJ

National Grid Reference: Centred on SK 0455 8265

Site area: 0. 0.923ha

Recipients: Urban Construction Interiors Ltd

Record of activity

- **Background**

  Arbtech consulting Ltd were instructed by Urban Construction Interiors Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) evaluation of a development on the site, subject to a planning application with High Peak Borough Council for:

  - A residential development.

    [HPK/2016/0692]

- **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 3.1. 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 3.1 scheme.

- **Surveyor and date of survey**

  This survey report was carried out by Craig Williams BSc (Hons), MSc, DIC, MRSB of Arbtech Consulting Ltd. On10th July 2022. A previous Ecological Impact Assessment was carried out in 2016 by Access Ecology and is used as the ecological baseline. The baseline habitat map and the currently proposed soft landscaping plans are fond in appendix 1 and 2.
- The full version of the BNG metric version 3.1 was used for the assessment.
- The site, located by the road may have already been altered from the known baseline in 2016. The previous known baseline of g3c8 Holcus-Juncus neutral grassland is therefore used for the BNG metric – an approach outlined on page 21 of the *Biodiversity Metric 3.1 Auditing and accounting for biodiversity* user guide.

Summary findings

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

  Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (Land Opposite, Alders Meadow)

  This highlights that the change in biodiversity metrics is:

  - -55.04% for habitat units

Discussion

- The currently proposed plan results in a ~55% net loss in habitat units based on a loss of -2.12 habitat units, from a baseline of 3.86 habitat units).

- The current plan of removing the marshy, neutral grassland results in a biodiversity net loss, from the baseline as calculated from in the previous survey.

BNG metric update

- Updated proposed plans could be used to recalculate the metric, to achieve a 10% net gain, or to lessen the loss for the development.

- If the plans are not changed and no other significant ecological habitats are proposed on site, a financial contribution to off-site ecological enhancements within an approved scheme is required.

- This off-setting would be for **2.516 habitat units**

- This is calculated by the cost to meet the net gain target of 10% more than the 3.86 baseline level habitat units (4.246), with the proposed habitat value of the completed site (1.73) subtracted (**2.516**).

- Examples of such an offsetting scheme which could meet the units required would be:

    - **0.58ha** of modified grass of moderate condition converted to other neutral grass of good condition
    - **0.95ha** of modified grass of moderate condition converted to other neutral grass of good condition

    (Medium distinctiveness grassland required to meet BNG trading rules), area located inside the same Local Planning Authority or National Character Area. An ecology survey on the baseline habitat of any off-site land may be required for this gain to be confirmed.

- If a third-party habitat bank scheme is chosen, given a 2018 illustrative example by Defra of a habitat unit of compensation costing ~£12000, the offsetting for this site might be expected to be ~£30,192 (12000 x 2.516). This amount may be higher at the time of writing.

  Note: all three options can be used in any combination e.g., maximising units within the proposed plan through redesign, planting in client owned land off site and also contributing to a third-party provider for the remainder.

- Whichever option(s) is chosen, the mechanism for securing this compensation will need to be proposed to, and confirmed by the LPA e.g., purchasing conservation credits though a registered provider habitat unit provision scheme, directly through the client owned or LPA offered land or another provider such as a local nature reserve or park. As well as details on the creation and management of the habitat, petals of how the land is to be secured to the appropriate condition for at least 30 years - linked to the application through a planning obligation in Section 106 (S106) agreement.

Appendix 1: Habitat baseline map



Appendix 2: Proposed ecological map of the site (based on current plans)



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