

**BIODIVERSITY ACCOUNTING
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

at
**Land off Dinting Road
Higher Dinting
Glossop
Derbyshire
SK13 7EB**

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**Original Report:
19/03/2024**

**Updated on:
17/10/2024**



Quality Assurance

Version Ref	Desktop Survey Completed:		Site Surveyed:		Report Completed:		Reviewed:	
	Date	Name	Date	Name	Date	Name	Date	Name
001 21672/EIC	07/03/24	Eleanor Clark	23/01/24	Eleanor Clark Alex Donovan	15/03/24	Eleanor Clark	18/03/24 19/03/24	Alex Donovan Adam West
002 21672a/ADo	07/03/24	Eleanor Clark	23/01/24	Eleanor Clark Alex Donovan	11/10/24	Alex Donovan	14/10/24 16/10/24	Richard Westwood Adam West

This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the *British Standard 42020: Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development 2018* and the *CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct*.

Risk Assessment Completed	E.S. CLARK
Bio-security Procedure Completed	
Lone Worker Procedure Completed	



Executive Summary

JCA Limited was instructed by **Whiteley Eaves Ltd** to carry out a Biodiversity Accounting Assessment (BAA) of **Land off Dinting Road, Higher Dinting** (hereafter referred to as the 'site') to inform a planning application for the construction of three residential dwellings and associated soft landscaping ('the Proposed Development').

The purpose of the assessment is to determine the baseline biodiversity value of the site and to assess if there are sufficient biodiversity enhancement opportunities available within the site boundary to compensate for any residual biodiversity losses as a result of the Proposed Development.

To fulfil the brief, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (February 2024) was used to calculate the baseline biodiversity value of all existing habitats onsite. The metric was then used to provide a comparative measure of any habitat creation and enhancements associated with the Client's Proposed Development. The resulting balance determines the extent of habitat units and hedgerow units generated through the proposed habitats post development.

On balance of impacts and habitat retention/enhancement/creation, the report concludes that the Proposed Development will result in a **net gain of +0.21** Habitat Units, equivalent to a **net gain of +12.59%** and a **net gain of +0.08** Hedgerow Units, equivalent to a **net gain of +16.40%**, however, the Proposed Development has **not satisfied** the trading rules for habitats due to a loss of **-0.28** Habitat Units of medium distinctiveness grassland habitats. As such, the client should seek to undertake one or a combination of the following recommendations to achieve an overall biodiversity net gain in habitat BU and hedgerow BU, whilst meeting the Trading Rules:

- Incorporate onsite habitat creation/enhancement to compensate for the loss of medium distinctiveness habitat to achieve a minimum of 10% net gain whilst satisfying the Trading Rules. This can be achieved by incorporating **0.28** habitat units of medium distinctiveness grassland habitats, or **0.28** habitat units of any higher distinctiveness habitat.
- If onsite habitat creation/enhancement is not possible, then offsite habitat creation/enhancement will be required. This can be achieved by the purchase of additional land designated as a compensatory biodiversity offset site to compensate for the loss of **0.28** grassland habitat units, reach 10% net gain, and satisfy the Trading Rules.
- If neither onsite nor offsite compensation is possible, statutory biodiversity credits will need to be purchased as a last resort. Guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-biodiversity-credits>.



This executive summary is intended as a summary of the assessment of the site based on information received by the client at the time of production. This executive summary should be read in conjunction with the full Report.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

1.1.1 JCA Limited have been instructed by **Whiteley Eaves Ltd** to undertake a Biodiversity Accounting Assessment (BAA) of a site located at **Land off Dinting Road, Higher Dinting** (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). This is to inform a planning application for the construction of five residential dwellings and associated soft landscaping.

1.1.2 The purpose of this report is to:

- Assess the baseline biodiversity value of the site through the total sum of the habitats within the site, and their calculated biodiversity value.
- Assess if there are sufficient biodiversity enhancement and/or creation opportunities available within the site boundary to compensate for any residual biodiversity losses as a result of the Proposed Development.
- To determine the level of overall residual biodiversity gains or losses associated with the Proposed Development.

1.1.3 The site location and red line / survey area are shown in **Appendix 1**.

1.2 Terms of Reference

1.2.1 The principal source documents used to inform this BAA include:

- ERAP Ltd. – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Feb 2022 (2021-377).
- Whiteley Eaves Ltd. – Proposed Sit Plan (Job No. 210, Dwg No. 005, Rev I).
- Whiteley Eaves Ltd. – Proposed Site Sections (Job No. 210, Dwg No. 007, Rev C).
- Whiteley Eaves Ltd. – Proposed Plans and Elevations (Job No. 210, Dwg No. 004).



1.3 Site Description

- 1.3.1 The site is located at Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference **SK 02341 94569**, with nearby postcode **SK13 7EB**. The site is bordered to the north by Dinting Road and residential properties, to the east by residential properties. A railway line and woodland lies to the west and south.

1.4 Details of Proposed Development

- 1.4.1 The development proposed at the site is the construction of three residential properties and associated landscaping.



2. Biodiversity Accounting in Context

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Biodiversity is complex and so it is impossible to measure in its entirety. Therefore metrics, which incorporate measures of different biodiversity attributes, are used to provide surrogate measures of overall biodiversity. This report uses the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric', which was designed by DEFRA (2024) to define the biodiversity impacts and compensation requirements associated with development proposals. The metric works by providing a comparative measure of each habitat onsite in habitat units by multiplying its area (hectares), distinctiveness (habitat type) and current condition (quality). The relative impacts (habitat loss) of the development, accounting for any additional onsite habitat creation or enhancement, can then be calculated to determine if a measurable biodiversity net gain will be achieved onsite. If a measurable net gain is unable to be achieved onsite, then the process of biodiversity offsetting must be undertaken.
- 2.1.2 Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for residual losses, in a measurable way. Biodiversity offsetting is distinguished from other forms of compensation by the requirement for measurable outcomes. This is achieved by quantifying net biodiversity impacts caused by development; using the same metric to assess direct and indirect negative impacts to habitats and the value of any onsite compensation, to set the framework of offsite compensation (offset) requirements and the biodiversity net gain generated by these offsets. Biodiversity offsetting ensures that offsite compensation proposed is both proportionate to the development concerned and that a measurable net gain for biodiversity can be achieved.
- 2.1.3 Biodiversity offsetting, like other forms of compensation, is the last step of the mitigation hierarchy (first avoid, then reduce, and finally, compensate) and is applied as a last resort to otherwise policy-compliant development proposals. 'Offsetting' – i.e. creating or restoring new wildlife habitat in a measurable way and in a different place to where it was lost.
- 2.1.4 In addition to providing a mechanism for quantifiable compensation and net gain, biodiversity offsets provide reliable biodiversity outcomes as they are long-term (30 years), monitored and enforceable with adaptable management plans for optimised success.



2.2 Biodiversity Net Gain Principles

2.2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development published by CIEEM et. al (2016) states that delivering biodiversity net gain goes beyond balancing relative gains and losses. It also involves doing everything to avoid biodiversity losses in the first instance. The application of the DEFRA metric detailed in this report supports developments to adopt this approach by:

- a) Providing a habitat balance sheet which can be used to identify those habitats with the greatest value and subsequently those with the greatest impacts if lost;
- b) Supporting and incentivising the mitigation hierarchy by quantifying the benefits of avoiding and mitigating impacts on high value features;
- c) Promoting the value of biodiversity enhancements and demonstrating the potential for additionality on retained habitats;
- d) Providing a balance of losses, enhancements or onsite compensation to determine if a measure net gain contribution can be achieved;
- e) Providing transparent, robust and credible evidence to help inform the best possible Site options for biodiversity; and,
- f) Ensuring that any residual offsite compensation required (e.g. through biodiversity offsetting) is proportionate to the impacts and can secure a measurable net gain contribution for biodiversity overall.

2.3 Biodiversity Offsetting Standards

2.3.1 Good practice standards for biodiversity offsetting are set out by the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP, 2012). These standards inform the approach for selection and development of suitable Offset Sites and projects. Of these standards, the following provide the most relevant UK framework for the preliminary offset site search:

- The proposed offset site should be identified as suitable for the creation and/or enhancement of a target habitat within the vicinity of where the impact occurs.
- The site must be available and managed for a minimum specified term (typically 30 years).



- The landowner must agree to an enforceable delivery mechanism to secure the long-term management.
- The site must be available for monitoring to ensure appropriate management is being undertaken and to report biodiversity progress back to the local planning authority.

2.3.2 Further standards, with regards to offset site surveys and ensuring that appropriate target habitats and units can be achieved, will form part of the detailed site search that will precede the preliminary site search.

2.3.3 In addition to biodiversity net gains achieved onsite, offsite enhancements can also achieve positive outcomes for nature in the local area.



3. Policy and Legislation

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Planning guidelines, international commitments, legislation, and planning policies relevant to the protection, conservation and enhancement of nature conservation interests are detailed below.

3.2 National Policy and Guidance

3.2.1 Specific habitats and species of relevance to the site receive legal protection in the United Kingdom under various pieces of policy and legislation, including:

- The **Environment Act 2021** mandates that all planning applications will be required to demonstrate how a development will enhance biodiversity and protect habitats from November 2023. This is to be achieved through a measurable 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), in association with development through the use of the most up to date DEFRA Metric (currently Statutory Biodiversity Metric);
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, as revised 2023) sets out how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through amongst other things, ensuring BNG through development and protect ecological important sites and networks;
- The **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)** (retained in UK law by **CHSR (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019**) details the regulations for the protection of European Protected Habitat and Species. Such European Protected Species (EPS) of animals (**Schedule 2**) and plants (**Schedule 5**) include all species of bats, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, and European otter *Lutra lutra*, amongst others;
- The **Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)** covers the legislation for endangered species in England and the framework for the designation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- The **Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000** reinforces the wildlife legislation listed in the WCA and places a duty of government departments to consider biodiversity, and provides governmental department powers for the protection and maintenance of SSSIs;
- The **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006** places a duty upon local authorities to promote and enhance biodiversity in



all their functions. Specifically, habitats and species of principal importance to the conservation of biodiversity in regards to the planning process;

- The **Hedgerow Regulations 1997** provides protection by prohibiting the destruction or damage to important countryside hedges; and
- The **Protection of Badgers Act 1992** includes the protected of badgers under the act and that it is unlawful to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat badgers or attempt to do so.

3.2.2 Where relevant, this appraisal takes account of the legislative protection afforded to specific habitats and species.

3.3 Local Policy and Guidance

3.3.1 The High Peak Local Plan – (High Peak Borough Council, Adopted April 2016)

3.3.2 Policy EQ 5: Biodiversity

3.3.3 The biodiversity and geological resources of the Plan Area and its surroundings will be conserved and where possible enhanced by ensuring that development proposals will not result in significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity interests.

3.3.4 This will be achieved by:

- Conserving and enhancing sites of international, European, and national importance. On these sites the Council will not permit any development proposal that has an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site (or wildlife site given the same protection as European sites under the NPPF) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- Conserving and enhancing any Sites of Special Scientific Interest. On these sites the Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly (either individually or in combination with other developments) have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Conserving and enhancing regionally and locally designated sites. On these sites the Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - there is no appropriate alternative site available; and



- all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
 - appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided, such mitigation measures should ensure as a minimum no net loss and wherever possible net gain for biodiversity;
 - or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible;
 - the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.
- Encouraging development to include measures to contribute positively to the overall biodiversity of the Plan Area.
 - Working with partners to help meet the objectives and targets in the Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan or its successor.
 - Working with partners to protect and enhance watercourses.
 - Identifying local ecological networks and supporting their establishment and protection in accordance with Local Plan Policy EQ8, preferentially creating biodiversity sites where they have the potential to develop corridors between habitats (both terrestrial and freshwater).
 - Working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to develop and secure the implementation of projects to enhance the landscape and create or restore habitats of nature conservation value, and to secure the more effective management of land in the Plan Area and its surroundings.

3.3.5 Policy EQ 8: Green Infrastructure

3.3.6 The Council will, through partnership working, develop, protect, and enhance networks of Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

3.3.7 This will be achieved by:

- Requiring that development will not have a detrimental effect on the amount or function of existing green infrastructure unless replacement provision is made that is considered to be of equal or greater value than that lost through development; taking particular account of appropriate levels of mitigation where development would result in habitat fragmentation.
- Requiring that any green infrastructure development project that could result in adverse effects to a European site is subject to project-level HRA.



- Requiring that development proposals, where appropriate, contribute towards the creation of new or enhancement of existing green infrastructure, including public and private open space, recreation areas, parks and formal outdoor sports facilities, local nature reserves, wildlife sites, woodlands, allotments, bridleways, cycle ways and local green spaces.
- Requiring that through its layout and design, new development responds to the location of existing green infrastructure and ecological networks, supporting their appropriate uses and functions.
- Where appropriate, ensuring that green infrastructure helps mitigate the effects of climate change including through management of flood risk and waterways.
- The protection and extension of existing long-distance trails and development of a network of Greenways in accordance with the West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy Working with the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area and other partners to help create better access routes linking High Peak settlements into the surrounding countryside for tourism and recreation.
- Identifying and protecting key wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect sites of importance for biodiversity, including creating or restoring habitats of nature conservation value, in accordance with Local Plan Policy EQ5.

3.3.8 Policy EQ 9: Trees, woodland, and hedgerows

3.3.9 The Council will protect existing trees, woodlands, and hedgerows, in particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows from loss or deterioration.

3.3.10 This will be achieved by:

- Requiring that existing woodlands, healthy, mature trees and hedgerows are retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh their loss.
- Requiring new developments where appropriate to provide tree planting and soft landscaping, including where possible the replacement of any trees that are removed at a ratio of 2:1.
- Resisting development that would directly or indirectly damage existing ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows.



3.3.11 Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

3.3.12 The BAP for Derbyshire concentrates on habitats that had national action plans produced or are of local conservation concern. The habitats listed within the Derbyshire BAP can be seen below in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Habitats listed under the Derbyshire BAP.

LBAP Habitats	
Hedgerows	Heathland
Arable field margins	Rivers and streams
Lowland meadows	Standing open water
Calcareous grasslands	Swamps, mires, fens and reedbeds
Lowland dry acid grasslands	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Floodplain grazing marsh	Wood pasture, parkland, and veteran trees

