

EEL830 Buxton Road, Buxton- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

Elleendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by Grenergy Renewables UK Limited (the applicant) to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for an area of land at Buxton Road, Wormhill, Dove Holes, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK17 7HR ('the site'). The applicant is seeking to develop a BESS at the site ('the proposed development').

Using current information on the proposed development, this assessment estimates the BNG anticipated to be achieved through the proposed plans and has been undertaken with reference to the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 4.0¹. This is a biodiversity accounting tool used for the purposes of calculating biodiversity net gain for a site and is based on 'biodiversity units' calculated according to the habitats present and their size, distinctiveness and condition. This enables the quantitative calculation of the predicted change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development, with the objective of achieving a net gain in biodiversity.

In England, BNG is mandatory² under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

The site is approximately 1.5ha in size and is located to the north-east of the town of Buxton. It is bounded to the east by a railway line and to the west by Buxton Road. To the north there is a small broad-leaved woodland, beyond which are further agricultural fields. The wider landscape is comprised of primarily agricultural land.

The main area of the site is dominated by semi-improved grassland (UKHabs Modified Grassland), with pockets of marshy grassland throughout and a species-poor hedge of hornbeam on the border. The site was found to provide moderate potential for protected species, with a habitat available for common reptile and

¹ [Natural England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

² From 12th February 2024.

amphibian (information from the site has been obtained from a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) undertaken in 2024³).

The baseline ecological results for the site and the statutory biodiversity metric condition assessment tool have been used to provide an assessment of the baseline habitats (and units) as follows:

- **Habitat Condition: Modified Grassland** – This habitat was assessed as being moderate condition, based on its passing of 4 of the criteria including passing essential criterion A.

Following the BNG hierarchy, the grassland present will be enhanced on-site by way of management through reseeded and mowing. Furthermore, new habitat will be created on-site with planting of woodland habitat. The post-development site habitat units have been determined using the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation tool and this is summarised in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Site habitat creation (post-development)

BROAD HABITAT	HABITAT TYPE	AREA (HA)	CONDITION	TOTAL HABITAT UNITS	COMMENTS
Urban	Built linear features	0.4888	V Low	0.00	Total area of hardstanding, i.e. internal road, batteries and switching gear, etc.
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.8961	Medium	7.53	Suitable native grass and wildflower mixes sown around the BESS compound will enhance biodiversity and encourage wildlife. This will enhance the grassland present within the site.
Individual trees	Rural tree	0.0651	Medium	0.25	Planting of 16 individual trees within the site.
Woodland and forest	Other woodland; broad-leaved	0.1889	Medium	0.72	Additional tree planting will provide an enhanced habitat for a variety of wildlife and aid with visual screening of the development from the wider landscape.

³ EEL830R250217EA Buxton Road, Buxton Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) CIC v1.1

The hedgerow present along the site boundary will be maintained, with no additional hedgerow added post-development.

Based on this, the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation tool indicates that the proposed development will result in a net gain of **37.18 %** for non-linear habitats.

Positive effects for biodiversity are encouraged in new developments by contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks.

Examples of additional biodiversity improvements for the proposed development could include:

- The installation of bird and bat boxes to provide suitable nesting and roosting habitat;
- The plantation of native trees, shrubs and fruit trees to provide important resources, especially for early season pollinators, other insects and birds;
- The plantation of wildflower areas to benefit a large number of species including pollinators, small mammals, birds and other invertebrates;
- The use of wildlife friendly lighting to reduce the light disturbance for the local wildlife, including bats.

Appendix A – Landscape Proposal