



Land at Billingshurst, RH14 9HP

Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Report



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Notice to Readers:

The results of the survey and assessment work undertaken by All Ecology are representative at the time of surveying.

Every endeavour has been made to identify the presence of protected species on site, where this falls within the agreed scope of works.

The flora and fauna detailed within this report are those noted during the field survey and from anecdotal evidence. It should not be viewed as a complete list of flora and fauna species that may frequent or exist on site at other times of the year.

Up to date standard methodologies have been used, which are accepted by Natural England and other statutory conservation bodies. No responsibility will be accepted where these methodologies fail to identify all species on-site.

All Ecology cannot take responsibility where Government, national bodies or industry subsequently modify standards.

All Ecology cannot accept responsibility for data collected from third parties.

Reference to sections or particular paragraphs of this document taken out of context may lead to misrepresentation.

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1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 All Ecology was commissioned to produce a Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Report for a site known as Land at Billingshurst, RH14 9HP. The site is part of a grassland field with tall ruderal habitat, pockets of scrub and a small number of boundary trees, hedge and boundary fence.
- 1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application for the erection of a commercial unit with surrounding, yard, car parking and planting. Other commercial development is either proposed or has recently been constructed to north and west of the site.
- 1.3 The Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool is used to calculate the biodiversity value of a site before and after development and then calculates if the development is likely to cause a loss or gain to biodiversity. It will also calculate the amount of compensation the site may need in the form of Biodiversity Offsetting.

Site Location



2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 The Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator was provided by Defra. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric, published in November 2023, provides developers, planners, land managers and others with a robust but simple tool to account for the value of nature and better understand how development and land management change will impact on its value over time.
- 2.2 The DEFRA Metric uses UKHab habitat definitions translated from JNCC Phase 1 habitat definitions where required, and the Natural England Hedgerow Impact Assessment Guide to calculate the overall scores for habitats and linear features on site and determine net gain/net loss. The User Guide to Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric and the supporting Technical Supplements were followed for accurate data entry into the calculator.
- 2.3 The habitats and linear features were originally identified on site during The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. This included full habitat descriptions and photographs. Areas and lengths of the current habitats and linear features were determined using Google Earth and topographical surveys. The proposed site plans were used and measured to determine retained and new habitats for the site and to look for opportunities for enhancement.

3.0 Results

Habitats and Condition Assessment

3.1 Full results can be seen in Appendix 1.

Habitats and hedgerows to be retained, enhanced, created or lost

- 3.2 The proposed development will result in the clearance of the majority of habitats including 1.1596 ha of the existing grassland, 0.18 ha of tall ruderal habitat and small pockets of bramble scrub (0.022 ha). The telecommunications compound adjacent to the east boundary of the site will be retained. Some boundary habitats will also be retained and protected from construction works by the erection of fencing to BS 5837 standard including 1 small tree, 6 medium trees, 2 large tree and the native hedgerow (0.025 km) alongside the compound.
- 3.3 The proposed development will include the creation of a building and associated car park and yard including an existing footpath resulting in 1.1781 of developed land and artificial surfaces. Areas of flowering lawn grass (0.0656 ha), ornamental shrub planting (0.0122 ha) and native scrub as buffer planting (0.1057 ha). 23 small trees will be planted around the outer peripheries of the site (trees within scrub areas have not been included within the metric calculation as these will form part of the scrub).
- 3.4 As part of the landscape scheme 0.22 km of beech and hornbeam hedge will be planted through the site, primarily on or near to the development boundaries.
- 3.5 The creation, enhancement and maintenance of habitats and hedgerows will be detailed in a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan to be secured by appropriate planning condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain – Habitats

- 3.6 The site development, based on current and proposed habitat conditions, distinctiveness and areas, would result in a net unit change of -7.17 units; this is a net percentage change of -66.20%.
- 3.7 Table 1: Habitat biodiversity net gain results (further detail in Appendix 1)

	Habitat Biodiversity Value
Baseline Units	10.84
Post-intervention Units	3.66
Net Unit Change	- 7.17
Net Percentage Change	- 66.20%

Biodiversity Net Gain – Hedgerows

3.8 The site development, based on current and proposed hedgerow conditions, distinctiveness and areas, would result in a net unit change of +0.23 units; this is a net percentage change of +155.69%.

3.9 Table 2: Hedgerow biodiversity net gain results (further detail in Appendix 1)

	Hedge Biodiversity Value
On-site Baseline Units	0.15
On-site Post-intervention Units	0.38
Total Net Unit Change	0.23
Total Net Percentage Change	155.69%

4.0 Conclusion

Biodiversity Offsetting

- 4.1 The proposed development and proposed landscape will result in a habitat net percentage change of – 66.20% (-7.17 units) and a hedgerow net percentage gain of 155. 69% (+ 0.23 units).
- 4.2 As a habitat loss has been demonstrated, Biodiversity Offsetting will be required. Recommendations within the ecology reports produced to date should be followed. The full details of the proposed landscape scheme will be provided by Davies Landscape Architects.
- 4.3 A full specification of habitats and hedgerows including relevant management to be produced within a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to development.
- 4.4 The developer would either need to find additional land to use for off-site offsetting or use an offsetting provider, who would use the results of the metric to understand how many units and habitats required to offset the net loss on site. In order to buy off-site units, the gain site must create and enhance habitat to meet the needs of the specific BNG requirements from the metric results or a site that has already started creating and enhancing habitat that meets the specific BNG requirements. The developer can buy off-site biodiversity units from:
- Directly from a landowner
 - From a habitat bank operator
 - Through a broker
 - From a Trading platform
 - From the LPA (If they provide this service)
- 4.5 Additional off-site land used by the developer or provided by an offsetting provider will need to be registered on the national biodiversity gain sites register before, or at the same time as, or after units are bought. A legal agreement will be required to secure a site for BNG and set out who will undertake the BNG creation, enhancement and management for 30 years. This applies to habitats on-site used for BNG which provide significant net gains on site and also off-site offsetting. Developers can choose off-site habitats which are already legally secured and registered, in which case these off-site habitats for not need to be legally secured again. If off-site habitats do not already have a legal agreement, the developer must enter a section 106 agreement before planning permission is granted.
- 4.6 As a last resort only, statutory biodiversity credits can be purchased from the credit sales service provided by Natural England which is a financial contribution which counts towards 10% BNG which is used to fund biodiversity enhancements across England. Prices are based on the cost to create, maintain and monitor different habitat types and there is a mark-up to prevent statutory credit prices undercutting the off-site market.

5.0 References

All Ecology Ltd. (2024), Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 2.0: Land at Billingshurst, RH14 9HP – Phase III.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2024), *Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>
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Davies Landscape Architects (2025), Soft Landscape Proposals: Billingshurst. Phase 3 – Unit 1.

Plan 1 – Soft Landscape Proposals



7.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool

See attached Excel spreadsheet

Appendix 2 – Baseline Habitat Condition Assessments

See attached Excel spreadsheet

Appendix 3 – UKHab Baseline Habitat Plan

See attached plan

