



GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING

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Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Report - Land Adjacent to Cleggswood Farm, Hollingworth

SUMMARY

A Biodiversity Net Gain baseline calculation is required to meet National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 180(d), 2023) at the above-named site.

The proposed development site baseline condition is currently of low ecological value, consisting of poor condition modified grassland, well poached, with areas of bare ground & tall ruderals in the form of nettle stands.

Loss of poor condition modified grassland (0.22hu) can be offset by planting 20 x native trees within the holding (0.25hu), or the purchase of .25 habitat units.

(Location TBC and to be secured by condition on decision).

Providing a 15.21% net gain.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (issued 07.2024) was used to calculate the baseline and potential proposed habitats on the site.

INTRODUCTION

Background

An assessment was required to determine the potential Biodiversity Net Gain or loss and any ecological constraints of the site at land to the north-east of Cleggswood Farm, Higher Lakewood, Hollingworth Road, Littleborough, OL15 0AZ, with a site survey carried out on 19/06/25, to support a planning application for an agricultural building.

Scope of the Report

The assessment takes into consideration the local and national planning policy and strategy relevant to the site, the baseline ecological condition of the site, the proposed development plans and the enhancement plan, and aims to meet the requirements of The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and standards set in the CIEEM/CIRIA *Biodiversity Net Gain. Good Practice Principles for development a practical guide*.

METHODOLOGY

Desk and Field Study Methods

- Habitats are described using the UK Habitat Classification System methods and codes, and condition assessed according to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity Condition Assessment Sheets.
- Areas were measured both on-site and online using Google Earth and Open Street Map through QGIS, and dimensions provided by the client from their landscape plans.
- A site survey was carried out on 17/04/2025.
- Surveys and assessment were carried out by C Edmondson MSc MRSB, consultant ecologist with 12yrs field survey experience and Natural England Class 2 bat licence holder.
- Survey methods used follow the UKHab V2.1 guidelines for habitat survey.

Approach to BNG

BNG Principles: BNG is achieved through 10 principles, the first of which is the Mitigation Hierarchy. This Hierarchy will be followed at each stage of the development.

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric was used to:

- Assess the biodiversity unit value of an area of land.
- Demonstrate biodiversity net gains or losses in a consistent way.
- Measure and account for direct impacts on biodiversity.
- Compare proposals for the site - e.g. creating or enhancing habitat on-site or off-site.
- Assess existing habitats and planned new habitats created by development.
- BNG Urban tree helper was used to calculate the unit value of any individual trees present on site and post development.

Limitations

- No limitations

BASELINE SITE CONDITIONS

Site Description

The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 93945 15548, set in a rural landscape close to Hollingworth Lake, Littleborough.

The area covered by the proposals consists of modified grassland in poor condition (See PEA report, BEK, July 2025 for full survey details and species lists)

The site provides negligible habitat for most species of wildlife.

A nearby pond was determined unsuitable for supporting GCN breeding due to heavy use by cattle.

- Headline Results at Annex 1, Baseline Map at Annex 2, Site Proposals at Annex 3 and Condition Assessment at Annex 4.

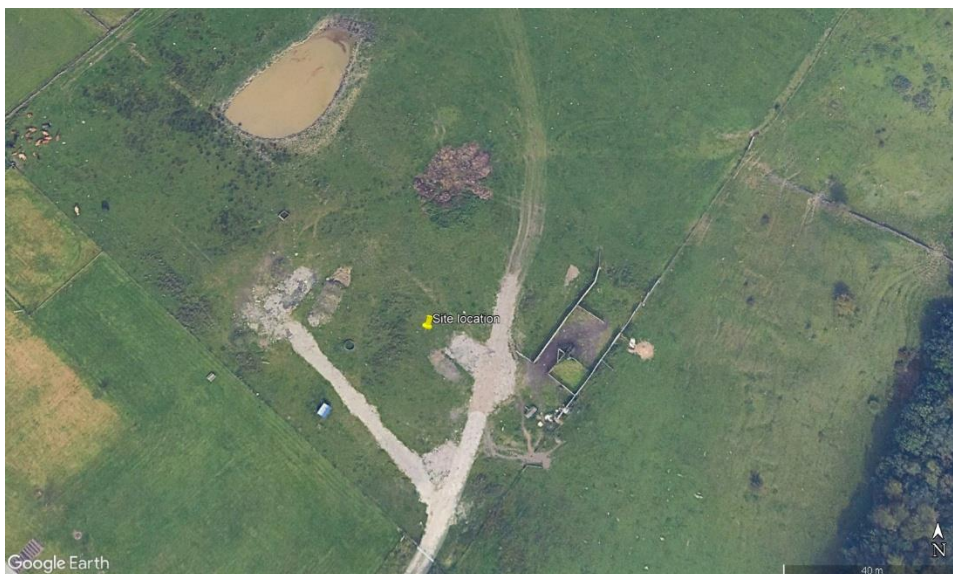


Figure 1: Aerial View Showing the Site Layout (Google Earth, 2024)

Important Ecological Features:

- No potential protected species habitat present within the red line boundary of the proposals.

Baseline Metric Calculations

Using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation tool, the development shows a baseline habitat unit total of 0.22hu. The table below shows the breakdown of habitat areas and units.

A full Habitat Baseline Plan is included in Annex 2. The proposed plan is presented in Annex 3.

Table 1: Habitats at Baseline Calculation

Ref	Habitat description	Code (UKHABS)	Area ha/length/no.	BNG units
BH1	Modified grassland	G4	1080sqm	0.22
	Total			0.22

BNG GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT

BNG is achieved through 10 principles, the first of which is the Mitigation Hierarchy. This Hierarchy will be followed at each stage of development, through the measures at Table 2.

Principle 1: Mitigation Hierarchy

- 1: Avoid Biodiversity Loss e.g. Finding alternative sites, changing development plans etc
- 2: Minimise any loss
- 3: Mitigate for any loss
- 4: Compensate

Table 2: Hierarchy Measures

1: Avoidance 'Measures taken to anticipate and prevent adverse impacts on biodiversity before actions or decisions are taken that could lead to such impacts'.	Measures to avoid pollution will be implemented according to current EA Pollution Prevention Guidance. Site clearance carried out under a "Reasonable Avoidance Measures" Method statement.
2. Minimise	Containing the development footprint to avoid impacting the wider area.
3. Mitigation	Replacing lost habitat on site e.g creating new habitats on-site, purchase of off-site habitat units
4. Compensation	Additional units to achieve over 10% BNG

Principle 2. Avoid Losing Biodiversity That Cannot Be Offset By Gains Elsewhere:

Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity – these impacts cannot be offset to achieve No Net Loss or Net Gain.

- No Priority Habitats or Irreplaceable habitats are present on site.

Principle 3: Be Inclusive and Equitable

Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to Biodiversity Net Gain. Achieve net gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.

Principle 4: Address Risk

This is addressed within the metric and methodology set out within this document.

Principle 5: Make a Measurable Net Gain Achievement

This will be achieved through the landscape plan and biodiversity enhancement plan.

Principle 6: Achieve the Best Outcomes for Biodiversity:

Principle 7: Be Additional:

Aiming to achieve over 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain.

Principle 8: Create a Net Gain Legacy:

Habitat secured for 30 years

Principle 9: Optimise Sustainability & Prioritise Biodiversity:

By implementing the enhancements and recommendations in the PEA in the landscaping plan.

Principle 10: Be Transparent:

Communicate all Biodiversity Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

PROPOSED DESIGN & BNG FEASIBILITY

Biodiversity Net Gain proposals:

The following assumptions have been made regarding this calculation:

- Proposals only, the purchase of units or full landscape plan showing location of tree planting to be secured as condition of the planning decision.
- The area measurements are taken from CT Planning drawing no:- CT 25 / 023 / 1

Table 3: Habitat Enhanced/Created

Created On-Site Features:	Code (UKHABS)	Area ha/length/no.	BNG units
Developed land, sealed surface including buildings, road and pathways	u1b	0.1080	0.00
20 native trees to reach moderate condition in 27yrs			0.25
Total uplift in units			0.03 = 15.21%

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN CALCULATION

Loss of poor condition modified grassland could be offset by planting 20 x native trees within the holding, or the purchase of .25 habitat units.

(Location TBC and to be secured by condition on decision).

Providing a 15.21% net gain

REFERENCES

- CIEEM (2021). Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.
- CIEEM (2016) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
http://www.cieem.net/data/files/Publications/EcIA_Guidelines_Terrestrial_Freshwater_and_Coastal_Jan_2016.pdf
- CIEEM (2013) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
http://www.cieem.net/data/files/Resource_Library/Technical_Guidance_Series/GPEA/GPEA_April_2013.pdf
- CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development. A practical guide. CIRIA C776a. London, 2019.
- National Planning Policy Framework, 2023
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF/2023.pdf

ANNEX 1

BNG Metric Output

Land adj. to Cleggswood	Return to results menu		
Headline Results			
Scroll down for final results △			
On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.22	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.25	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.03	15.21 %
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00 %
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00 %
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00 %
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00 %
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00 %
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.03	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.03	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	15.21 %	
	Hedgerow units	0.00 %	
	Watercourse units	0.00 %	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

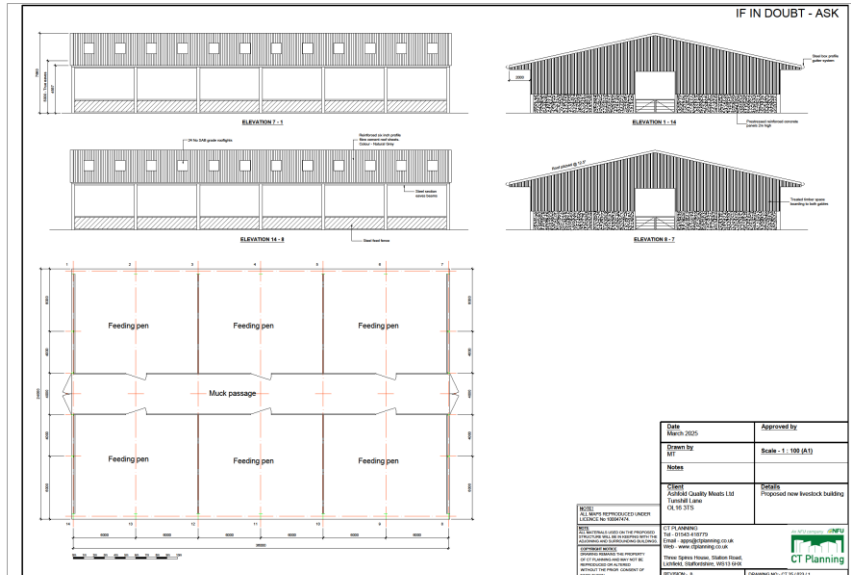
ANNEX 2

Baseline plan



ANNEX 3

Proposed plan



ANNEX 4

Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Land Adj. Cleggswood	Survey date and Surveyor name	19/06/25 Carol Edmondson
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference	SD 93945 15548	Habitat parcel reference	
Habitat Description			
UKHab - UK Habitat Classification			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	No	max 5
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	yes	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	yes	
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	No	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	No	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	yes	
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		No	
Number of criteria passed		4	
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x√	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	Yes	
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Footnotes			
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> . Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			