



Land at Brixworth Cricket Club,  
Brixworth, Northamptonshire

***Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility  
Study***

Prepared by  
**Griffin Ecology Ltd.**

Instructed by  
**Framptons Town Planning**

On behalf of  
**Dallas Burston Estates**

**Project No. GE0641**

**We assist our clients to deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity.**

Quality Management	
Client	Dallas Burston Estates
Project	Land at Brixworth Cricket Club, Brixworth, Northamptonshire
Report Title	Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Study
Project No	GE0641
Status	Draft   8th April 2024
Author	Casey-Ruth Griffin BSc (hons) MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist
Quality Check	Ian Griffin, Commercial Director
Approved by	Casey-Ruth Griffin BSc (hons) MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist

**Copyright**  
 The copyright of this document remains with Griffin Ecology Limited. All rights reserved. The contents of this document therefore must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part for any purpose without the written consent of Griffin Ecology Limited.

**Confidentiality**  
 This report may contain sensitive information relating to protected species. All records of Badger setts must remain confidential. Where this report is circulated publicly or uploaded to online planning portals, reference to Badger setts must be redacted and any maps pertaining to the locations of Badger setts removed from the document.

**Legal Guidance**  
 The information set out within this report in no way constitutes a legal opinion on the relevant legislation (refer to the relevant Appendix for the main provisions of the legislation). The opinion of a legal professional should be sought if further advice is required.

**Liability**  
 This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning client and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Griffin Ecology Limited no other party may use, or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Griffin Ecology Limited for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the advice in this report. The content of this report is partly based on information provided by third parties; Griffin Ecology Limited accepts no liability for any reliance placed on such information. This report is subject to the restrictions and limitations referenced in Griffin Ecology Limited’s standard Terms of Business.

**Contact Details**  
**Griffin Ecology Ltd.**  
 Bloxham Mill Business Centre, Barford Road,  
 Bloxham, Oxfordshire, OX15 4FF, United Kingdom  
 Tel: 01295 982022

## Contents

---

1.	Introduction .....	4
	Limitations .....	4
2.	Planning Policy .....	5
3.	Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principals .....	5
4.	Methodology.....	5
5.	Calculation of Biodiversity Units .....	6
6.	Discussion and Conclusions .....	8
7.	References .....	9

## 1. Introduction

Griffin Ecology Ltd. has been commissioned by the client to compile a Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Study in relation to the proposed planning application for a mixed use development at Brixworth Cricket Club in Brixworth, Northamptonshire. This document seeks to provide a biodiversity impact assessment relating to the proposals.

This study has been informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in addition to a desk-top study for relevant habitats and/or strategic nature conservation designations. As such, this document should only be read in conjunction with this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, Project No. GE0575, Griffin Ecology Ltd., dated April 2024.

Calculation of biodiversity net gain units has been undertaken using the Natural England Statutory Metric Tool (December, 2023) and follows guidance set out within the Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development (Baker et al., 2019).

This BNG Assessment aims to:

- Follow the good practice principals set out in the informing documents (Baker et al., 2019)
- Understand baseline conditions prevailing on site at the time of survey by; classifying the type, distinctiveness, condition, connectivity and strategic significance of habitats present prior to and post- development.
- Ensure that baseline habitat conditions are classified in a robust and consistent manner, and that classification is based on the most recent technical guidance provided to inform the metric.
- Calculate baseline pre- and post-development habitat units and hedgerows units for the site based on current development proposals (Proposed Site Plan, Dwg. No. A101 and Draft Tree Retention and Loss Plan Dwg No. 03)
- Where possible, propose a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) design through habitat creation, enhancement and succession.
- Aim to achieve BNG on-Site wherever possible; with off-site measures being considered as an alternative option if required.

### Limitations

As is the nature of ecology surveys, this study serves to provide only a “snapshot” of the conditions prevailing at the time of survey.

It is important to note that the planning system is not approached on a mechanistic basis but instead involves expert opinion, provided by ourselves as independent Ecological Consultants, having considered the results of the BNG calculation tool within our overall assessment. As such, the results of this tool cannot be considered determinative.

Should the landscape proposals change the supporting Metric will need to be subject to review accordingly.

## 2. Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework NPPF (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021) sets out within Section 15 Para 174 which states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:....*

*d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;”*

Additionally, Para 180 of the NPPF states:

*“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:...*

*d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”*

## 3. Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principals

When considering the good practice principals of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG, CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA, 2016) which provide a framework to help improve the UK's biodiversity by contributing towards strategic priorities to conserve and enhance nature while progressing with sustainable development, the following should be taken into account:

- Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy – This principal prioritizes the avoidance of impacts to most valuable habitats wherever possible.
- Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere.
- Be inclusive and equitable.
- Address risk – mitigate against difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving net gain.
- Make a measurable net gain contribution.
- Achieve the best outcome for biodiversity.
- Be additional – Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations.
- Create a net gain legacy – ensure net gain generates long-term benefits.
- Optimise sustainability.
- Be transparent.

## 4. Methodology

In order to appropriately inform the assessment of the habitat types, condition and strategic significance, a desk study has been undertaken. This includes a review of the following:

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy  
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database  
Northamptonshire Biological Records Centre (NBRC)  
Northants Bat Group

The results of this desk study are presented within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Griffin Ecology Ltd. as revised in April 2024 (Ref GE0575).

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric and the informing walkover survey aided in determining if habitats within the site occur within any strategic locations for biodiversity.

The length and extent of habitats and linear features on site have been determined following review of the baseline maps and using the QGIS Mapping tool.

Natural England have provided a method for undertaking condition assessments in England to support the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessments. The aim being to standardise the approach to carrying out condition assessments to aid repeatability and replicability. The condition assessment methodology is set out within the supporting Statutory Metric Condition Assessment is provided within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report.

## 5. Calculation of Biodiversity Units

The Statutory Metric (December 2023) was used to calculate the change in biodiversity units and the overall percentage of gain/loss achieved. Metric calculations have been undertaken by Casey Griffin MCIEEM having reviewed the available information.

This BNG metric has been completed in consideration of the following document:

- Proposed Site Plan, Dwg. No. A101
- Draft Tree Retention and Loss Plan Dwg No. 03

Should landscape proposals change the supporting Metric will need to be subject to review accordingly.

### ***Onsite Baseline Habitats:***

Total Area for the purpose of the BIA = 3.15ha

### **Baseline Habitats include:**

- 1.55ha of grassland; other neutral grassland offering “medium” distinctiveness assessed as in “Poor” condition. Some 0.19ha of this grassland parcel will be retained and incorporated within the proposed landscaping relating to the service centre.
- 0.1ha of grassland; modified grassland of “low” distinctiveness and assessed to be in poor condition. This habitat currently functions as part of the cricket facilities on site and will be lost to enable woodland screening planting to the south of the development footprint.
- 0.04ha of bramble scrub of “medium” distinctiveness is present to the eastern edge of the site. This area will be retained and protected as part of proposed badger mitigation measures.
- 0.11ha of developed land; sealed surface is present on site. This forms the existing access road and will be retained and repurposed for this development.

- 0.47ha of vacant; derelict land of “low” distinctiveness and assessed to be in “moderate” condition. This habitat will be lost to enable the proposed spa and wellness centre with associated car parking.
- 0.88ha of other woodland; mixed of “medium” distinctiveness and assessed as in “poor” condition. 0.25ha of this woodland will be retained and protected outside of the proposed development area to the north of the service centre. The further extent of this woodland will be retained, however adjacent development of residential dwellings will result in this habitat being located within vegetated garden space and therefore it is accounted as lost as a result of development.
- 0.004ha of other woodland; broadleaved of “medium” distinctiveness and assessed to be in “poor” condition. This small parcel of habitat will be retained and included within the wider extent of woodland planting proposed.
- Three linear features are present on site. These include H1, the roadside hedgerow as well as the two internal hedgerows (H2 & H3) which contained a number of standard trees. As the canopies of these trees are overlapping and are associated with the linear corridor. Additionally, they do not have a qualifying DBH.
- No irreplaceable habitats are present on site or adjacent to it.

***Onsite Habitat Creation:***

- 1.75ha of developed land, sealed surface is proposed. This will include the proposed developed areas including buildings, car parking and proposed hard landscaping.
- 0.305ha of modified grassland of “low” distinctiveness and managed to “poor” condition is proposed. This will include areas of amenity grassland and to the edge of curtilage.
- 0.02ha of urban SUDs of “low” distinctiveness and managed to “moderate” condition is proposed. This feature will be engineered and landscaped to hold water, providing biodiversity value.
- 0.19ha of other neutral grassland of “medium” distinctiveness will be retained and incorporated within the proposed landscaping strategy.
- 0.38ha of other vegetated garden of “low” distinctiveness is proposed. This will also include the woodland habitat, however the continued ecological functionality of this habitat cannot be secured.
- 0.1ha of other woodland; broadleaved of “medium” distinctiveness is proposed along the southern edge of development.
- 0.005ha of introduced shrub planting of “low” distinctiveness is proposed around areas of car parking.
- The Proposed site plan indicates the inclusion of some 20 urban trees within areas of landscaping. These trees will be small in size and would be expected to reach “poor” condition within the proposed 30 year management period.

## Results of BNG Metric:

### Habitat Impacts

When considering the proposals within the Statutory BNG Metric (December, 2023), a net loss of **-8.06 habitat units** is represented. Furthermore, the proposals, in their current form, do not comply with the trading down rules applied within the BNG metric, given the extent of grassland and woodland loss. The extent of developed area is such that the delivery of required habitat areas, to accommodate the trading down rule, within the metric is not possible.

### Hedgerow Impacts

The proposal will result in adverse impacts to the existing linear features and when considering the proposals through the metric, result in a net loss of **-1.36 biodiversity hedgerow units**.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

Biodiversity Net Gain calculations, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (December, 2023) have been undertaken for the proposed outline application at Brixworth Cricket Club. Baseline habitat calculations have been informed by field surveys and subsequent condition assessments. Post development calculations have been made based on the most current Site Layout. Assumptions and limitations to the assessment have been highlighted where relevant, and identified in the Metric calculator which should be reviewed in conjunction with the informing reports.

The constraints relating to the development of this site are such that a net biodiversity loss of biodiversity habitat and hedgerow units will result. These constraints result in insufficient area of compensatory grassland and woodland habitat on site post development.

Proposals have been designed to seek the retention of as much high value habitats as possible however, some retained woodland will be located within the proposed vegetated garden space. The control and future management of the retained woodland cannot be guaranteed and therefore its permanent loss is accounted for.

Following the results of the feasibility study, the required measurable net gains in biodiversity have not been successfully demonstrated and therefore further BNG contributions would be required in order to meet the current requirements of both the NPPF and local planning policy.

It is, however, important to note that the planning system is not approached on a mechanistic basis but instead involves expert opinion, provided by us as independent Ecological Consultants, having considered the results of the BIA calculation tool within our overall assessment. As such, the results of this tool cannot be considered determinative.

Measurable opportunities for biodiversity enhancement should be agreed (and enforced by condition of granted planning permission) within a tailored Biodiversity Habitat Management Plan, providing a prescribed and appropriate approach to the management of biodiversity enhancements for the lifetime of the development.



## 7. References

- CIEEM, 2018. Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- CIEEM, 2018. Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal. 2nd ed. Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
- CIEEM, 2017. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management Website. [Online] Available at: [www.cieem.net](http://www.cieem.net)
- Biodiversity Net Gain; Good Practice Principals for Development, CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA, 2016

## Appendix 1: Statutory Metric

- See detailed spreadsheet calculation attached.

### Appendix 3: Post Intervention Habitats Map



