FUTURESECOLOGY

Voyage Care

Brockley Terrace, Boldon Colliery

BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (BIA)

Report Reference Number: FE452/BIA01

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following report has been prepared by Futures Ecology Ltd. on behalf of Voyage Care. This summary report presents the results of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) Calculations using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool produced in respect of proposals for development at Brockley Terrace, Boldon Colliery (grid reference: NZ3435562329).

1.2 A separate Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA, Futures Ecology, October 2024, Report Ref: FE452/PEA01) has been undertaken. This should be read in conjunction with this report.

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

1.3 The Site is situated in the village of Boldon Colliery in South Tyneside. Immediately surrounding the Site are residential areas and areas of amenity grassland, with allotments located further north-east. There is a commercial area further to the south-east. The wider landscape consists mainly of residential areas, agricultural land and parcels of woodland.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

1.4 The development proposals are for a care home with associated landscaping as detailed on the Proposed Landscaping Plan (31/44 Architects, Drawing number: 44/2404/PL_1400, October 2024).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

FIELD SURVEY – HABITATS

Personnel

2.1 J. Brown MSc, BSc (Hons) has 3 years' experience of conducting and leading field surveys for protected species across a wide range of sites.

Habitat Appraisal

2.2 A detailed habitat survey was undertaken on 24th September 2024 and was used to fully inform the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.

2.3 Survey methodology followed guidance from Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) 2016[1] comprising a walkover of the survey area mapping (using JNCC standard habitat codes) and broadly describing and classifying the principal habitat types and identifying the dominant plant species present within each habitat type, noting any features of interest.

[1] JNCC (2016) Handbook for Phase1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit. ISBN 0 86139 636 7

2.4 A summary of the habitats present on-site is provided within the report including UKHab equivalent habitats (from the UK Habitats Classification methodology[2]) for the purpose of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA).

Habitat Condition Assessment (HCA)

2.5 Habitat condition was assessed and assigned during the Phase 1 assessment following the guidance from the 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology' excel document (Natural England, February 2024) which accompanies the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Assessment criteria were followed for each broad habitat type, to determine the condition of each habitat.

Survey Limitations

2.6 The habitat survey was completed in September 2024, which is inside the optimal survey season for most habitats (March - October).

2.7 Given the nature of the Site and that the Site visit was undertaken within the optimal survey season for the majority of habitats no constraints were anticipated.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

2.8 Strategic significance is the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type.

2.9 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric assigns strategic significance based on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and descriptions set out in Table 7 of the Statutory Metric User Guide (November 2023)[3]. In the absence of an LNRS, the relevant planning authority should specify alternative documents for assigning strategic significance whilst an LNRS is put in place.

2.10 Consequently, the strategic significance of the on-site baseline habitats is the determined by whether the habitats fell within:

- any designated sites;
- any national habitat networks (as identified using the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)[4]); or
- any local sites or green infrastructure corridors.

BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (BIA)

2.11 To quantify deliverable net gain for the application, the baseline value of the habitats within the site have been calculated utilising The Statutory Biodiversity Metric[5].

[2] ukhab – UK Habitat Classification
3 DEFRA (November 2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. User Guide (draft).
[4] www.magic.defra.gov.uk
[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

3.0 BASELINE ECOLOGY

3.1 A summary of the habitats present on-site is provided in Table 1 below including UK Hab equivalent habitats for the purpose of the BIA. The baseline habitats are displayed on Figure 1 .

Table 1: Summary of Habitats

Phase 1 Habitat Type	UK Hab Classification for BNG	Habitat Condition Assessment (HCA)
Application Site		
Cultivated/disturbed land – Ephemeral/short perennial	Sparsely vegetated land: Ruderal/Ephemeral	Criteria passed: C Criteria failed: A and B Condition: **Poor**
Improved grassland	Grassland: Modified Grassland	Criteria passed: C, D, F, G Criteria failed: A, B, and E Condition: **Poor**

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

3.2 For the purposes of this assessment, all onsite habitats have been assigned the strategic significance of '*Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy*'.

BASELINE SUMMARY

3.3 From the completed **Statutory Biodiversity Metric**, the value of the existing Site habitats is **0.16 Habitat Units**.

4.0 BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 In accordance with NPPF 2023[6], the aim is to generate a measurable net gain for biodiversity.

4.2 Biodiversity Net Gain became mandatory for major development from 12th February 2024 and for small sites from 2nd April 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021[7]).

4.3 The Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy[8] (which does not apply to irreplaceable habitats) sets out a list of priority actions:

- first, in relation to on-site habitats which have a medium, high and very high distinctiveness (a score of four or more according to the statutory biodiversity metric), the avoidance of adverse effects from the development and, if they cannot be avoided, the mitigation of those effects; and

[6] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf
[7] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14/enacted
[8] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=406bfa99-898d-4dc6-b383-067c9ed1a773&utm_content=immediately#phased-development

- then, in relation to all on-site habitats which are adversely affected by the development, the adverse effect should be compensated by prioritising in order, where possible, the enhancement of existing onsite habitats, creation of new onsite habitats, allocation of registered off-site gains and finally the purchase of biodiversity credits.

4.4 Figure 2 outlines the proposed habitats across the application Site.

4.5 The baseline habitats (ephemeral / short perennial vegetation and modified grassland) are to be lost under the footprint of the development. Habitats to be created include:

- Developed land; sealed surface;
- Ground level planters;
- Modified grassland;
- Mixed scrub;
- Ground-based green wall; and
- Two small urban trees.

4.6 All figures are taken from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool and therefore any discrepancies are due to rounding.

POST-DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

4.7 Post development, the on-site habitat creation (Figure 2) with long-term management (for a minimum of 30 years) will achieve **0.08 Biodiversity Habitat Units**, which is a net loss of **0.08 Biodiversity Habitat Units**, equating to a **-52.23% net percentage loss.**

4.8 The habitat trading rules are also **not satisfied** given the overall net loss of Habitat Units.

Additional Enhancements

4.9 The above calculation does not account for the following additional enhancement measures that will be provided within the development as these cannot be quantified using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The provision of bat and bird boxes throughout the application Site would be considered a benefit to biodiversity.

Recommendations

4.10 As the development proposals cannot deliver a net gain on-site in area habitat units, there is a requirement to secure a net gain via an alternative mechanism. To achieve a 10% net gain, **0.10 Area Habitat Units** would be required. This could be provided by a combination of the following:

- Utilising off-site land under the control of the applicant to deliver the off-site requirement. The land should ideally be located in a strategic ecologically beneficial location.

- A Biodiversity Credit is calculated based on the Area Units required for the LPA or another third-party Habitat Bank (to be approved by the LPA) to take on responsibility to deliver the net gain for biodiversity[9].

5.0 GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The CIEEM Good Practice Principles for Development[10] provides an industry-standard to demonstrate that development projects have followed best practice. Table 2 below provides a summary of how these principles have been followed throughout this project.

Table 2: Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development[11] Summary

Principle	Justification of measures in place to achieve each Principle
Principle 1: Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision-makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.	The baseline habitats were low distinctiveness and their loss could not be avoided. There will be compensation planting (amenity grassland, mixed scrub, green wall, and native urban trees). These habitats have low and moderate distinctiveness and will provide shelter and food for variety of species.
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.	There are no irreplaceable habitats on Site.
Principle 3: Be inclusive and equitable Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to Net Gain. Achieve Net Gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible, and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.	The metric results were provided as soon as available and disseminated to all relevant parties. Futures Ecology were in contact with the landscaping team, to help inform their design.
Principle 4: Address risks Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving Net Gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.	The post-development habitats have been given conditions that are deemed achievable for the habitat type (poor or moderate). Habitats will be managed for a minimum of 30 years to achieve their target condition, with remediation undertaken if required over that time.

[9] https://www.leeds.gov.uk/planning/conservation-protection-and-heritage/achieving-net-gain-in-biodiversity-guidance-for-developers
[10] https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Biodiversity-Net-Gain-Principles.pdf
[11] https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Biodiversity-Net-Gain-Principles.pdf

Principle 5: Make a measurable Net Gain contribution Achieve a measurable, overall gain1 for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.	There is currently a net loss in Area Habitat Units, although a measurable net gain contribution will be secured by either utilising off-site land or off-site contributions (to be determined).
Principle 6: Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly-justified choices when: • Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses • Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation • Achieving Net Gain locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels • Enhancing existing or creating new habitat • Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity	The Are Habitat Units on and off-site (to be determined) will have a benefit for biodiversity and incorporate habitats which will have benefits for local wildlife populations, such as bats, nesting birds, hedgehogs etc.
Principle 7: Be additional Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).	The net gains in Area Habitat Units off-site (to be determined) would not occur in the absence of this exercise.
Principle 8: Create a Net Gain legacy Ensure Net Gain generates long-term benefits by: • Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure Net Gain in perpetuity[12] • Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management • Designing Net Gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change • Mitigating risks from other land uses • Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another • Supporting local-level management of Net Gain activities	Long-term management of the habitats created will be secured under a planning condition or legal agreement.
Principle 9: Optimise sustainability Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy	The habitats created on-site and net gains in Area Habitat Units off-site (to be determined) will have a benefit for biodiversity and people.
Principle 10: Be transparent Communicate all Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders	Net gain information has been communicated in a transparent and timely manner.

[12] Biodiversity compensation should be planned for a sustained Net Gain over the longest possible timeframe. For development in the UK, the expectation is that compensation sites will be secured for at least the lifetime of the development (e.g. often 25-30 years) with the objective of Net Gain management continuing in the future.

APPENDIX A: FE452 STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC CALCULATION TOOL

Brockley Terrace, Boldon Colliery

Headline Results

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Scroll down for final results ⚠

On-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.16		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.08		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	-0.08	-52.23%	On-site net gain is less than target set ▲
	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*	-0.08		
	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*	-0.08	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	-52.23%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲		

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	0.16	0.17	0.10	
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲



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Key

Site Boundary

Baseline Habitats

Cultivated/disturbed land - Ephemeral/short perennial [Sparsely vegetated land: Ruderal/Ephemeral]

I Improved grassland [Grassland: Modified grassland]

Client:	Voyage Care	Plan Reference:	FE452_01	Author:	JB
Project:	Brockley Terrace, Boldon Colliery	Project Reference:	FE452	Date:	16/10/2024
Title:	Figure 1 - Baseline Habitat Plan	Report Reference:	BIA01	Scale:	1:200

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Key

- Site Boundary

Post-development Habitats

- Buildings [Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
- Hardstanding [Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
- Cultivated/disturbed land - Amenity grassland [Grassland: Modified grassland]
- Scrub - dense/continuous [Heathland and shrub: Mixed scrub]
- Raised planters and flowerbeds [Urban: Ground level planter]
- Green wall [Urban: Ground based green wall]
- Small individual tree [Individual tree: Urban tree]

Client:	Voyage Care	Plan Reference:	FE452_02	Author:	JB
Project:	Brockley Terrace, Boldon Colliery	Project Reference:	FE452	Date:	21/10/2024
Title:	Figure 2 - Proposed Habitat Plan	Report Reference:	BIA01	Scale:	1:200

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