

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

47 SWEETCROFT LANE

PROPERTY ADDRESS

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LONDON
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DATE

SEPTEMBER 2026

PREPARED BY

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site description

This report has been prepared to support the planning application for the demolition of the existing house and erection of a two storey, new build house consisting of 6no. bedrooms with a basement at 47 Sweetcroft Lane, UB10 9LE.

Strategy

The strategy highlights how the proposed development will meet the requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain responding to the UK Planning and regulatory framework, National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (2020).

Site biodiversity context

The site is not located inside a boundary of or within 1km of a nationally or internationally designated site (SSSI, SPA, SAC or Ramsar site). There are no priority habitats or irreplaceable habitats located on the site, there are some areas of deciduous woodland within 500m but due to distance and scale of the development, are not deemed likely to be impacted. The site itself is located within an existing residential area, surrounded by other detached dwellings and associated gardens. The existing on-site biodiversity quality is low, with mostly sealed surfaces at the north of the site, and vegetated garden to the south with boundary trees and hedges. The proposed development includes enhancing and expanding the existing vegetated garden, alongside the creation of new hedgerow and shrub planting.

Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy

In accordance with the Biodiversity Gain and Mitigation Hierarchies detailed within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and Town and Country Planning Order (Development Management Procedure, England) 2015, this assessment uses DEFRA Statutory Metric. The project meets on-site hedgerow unit creation targets, and habitat unit targets can be met through the implementation of off-site measures.

2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Meaning of biodiversity gain hierarchy

37A. In this Part, “biodiversity gain hierarchy” means the following actions in the following order of priority—

- a. in relation to onsite habitat with a habitat distinctiveness score, applied in the biodiversity metric, equal to or higher than four—
 - i. avoiding adverse effects of the development, or
 - ii. insofar as those adverse effects cannot be avoided, mitigating those effects;
- b. in relation to any onsite habitat which is adversely affected by the development, compensating for that adverse effect by—
 - i. habitat enhancement of onsite habitat;
 - ii. insofar as there cannot be that enhancement, creation of onsite habitat;
 - iii. insofar as there cannot be that creation, the availability of registered offsite biodiversity gain for allocation to the development;
 - iv. insofar as registered offsite biodiversity gain cannot be allocated to the development, the purchase of biodiversity credits.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Habitats and biodiversity

185. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a. Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b. promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

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

- a. if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b. development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c. development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- 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.

187. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a. potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b. listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c. Sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

188. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies (2020)

The adopted Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies, adopted in 2020, includes the following relevant policies:

- **Policy DMEI 7: Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement**
Requires development proposals to retain and enhance existing features of biodiversity or geological value within the site. Where the loss of a significant biodiversity feature is unavoidable, replacement features of equivalent biodiversity value should be provided on-site. Where development constraints prevent the provision of high-quality on-site biodiversity enhancements, appropriate contributions towards off-site biodiversity improvements may be sought. Development proposals affecting sites or features of ecological value are also required to provide appropriate ecological surveys and assessments and demonstrate that the development will make a positive contribution to their protection and enhancement.
- **Policy DMEI 1: Managing the Flood Risk of Development**
Where relevant to the site, this policy supports the use of sustainable drainage and measures that can provide wider environmental and ecological benefits, including opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement.
- **Policy DMEI 4: Development on the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land**
Where applicable, development affecting Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land must protect the openness and character of these areas and consider their wider landscape and ecological value.
- **Policy DMEI 6: Development in Green Chains**
Where applicable, development within or affecting designated Green Chains should protect and enhance their green infrastructure and ecological functions and maintain connections between areas of open space and biodiversity value.
- **Policy DMEI 8: Waterside Development**
Where applicable, development affecting the River Thames, Grand Union Canal or other watercourses should protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological value, including opportunities for habitat creation and improved ecological connectivity.

London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

This LNRS sets out strategic biodiversity priorities and a spatial Nature Recovery Network to guide habitat restoration, enhancement and ecological connectivity. Waltham Forest Council states that development proposals should have due regard to the LNRS when determining appropriate nature recovery and restoration interventions.

3. METHODOLOGY

a. Guidance

This Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment follows CIEEM's 'Good practice principles for development' (2016):

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.

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.

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.

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.

Principle 5. Make a measurable Net Gain contribution

Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.

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

Principle 7. Be additional

Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).

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

- 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

Principle 9. Optimise sustainability

Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.

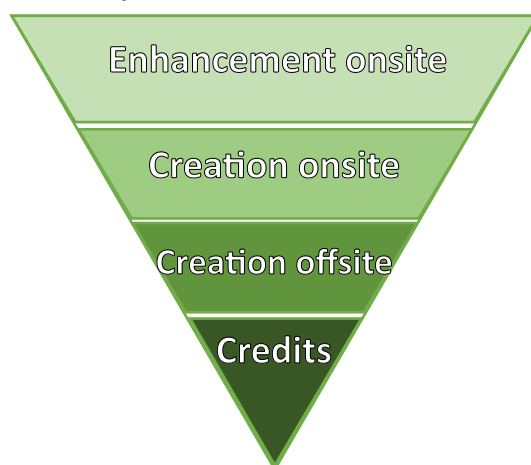
Principle 10. Be transparent

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

b. Biodiversity Hierarchies

This good practice guidance draws on two hierarchies within statutory guidance on how to measure BNG.

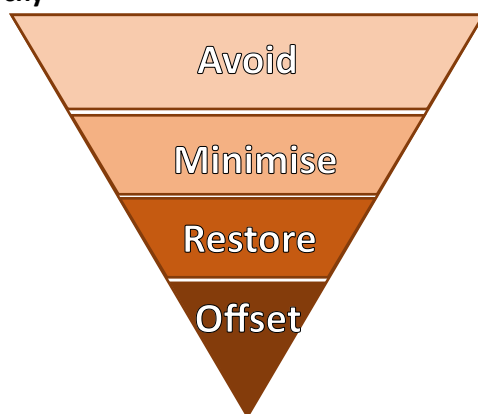
Figure 1: Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy



The Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy is introduced in Articles 37A and 37D of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. This hierarchy has been designed for the purpose of discharging the Biodiversity Gain condition to reflect the habitat categories in the biodiversity metric and the type of ways that the objective of at least a 10% gain can be achieved. The hierarchy, (which does not apply to irreplaceable habitats) sets out a list of priority actions:

1. For onsite habitats which have a medium, high and very high distinctiveness (a score of four or more according to the statutory biodiversity metric), to avoid adverse effects from the development and, if they cannot be avoided, the mitigation of those effects
2. For all onsite 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 offsite gains and finally the purchase of biodiversity credits.

The guidance also draws upon the Mitigation Hierarchy as set out in paragraph 186(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Figure 2: Mitigation Hierarchy

This hierarchy states that a planning application should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from the development cannot be:

1. avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts)
2. adequately mitigated
3. or, as a last resort, compensated for

4. SITE BIODIVERSITY CONTEXT

The site is not located inside a boundary of or within 1km of a nationally or internationally designated site (SSSI, SPA, SAC or Ramsar site). There are no priority habitats or irreplaceable habitats located on-site, but are some located within 500m. Due to distance from the site, and scale of the proposed development, no impacts are expected on these priority habitats. The site itself is located within an existing urban residential area, surrounded by other residential detached dwellings and associated gardens.

5. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN BASELINE

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) have been prepared by KJF Consulting, detailing that the site comprises a long hard surfaced drive that has a mature cherry laurel hedge at either side that leads to a hard surface parking area, a small lawn, a detached garage, two timber structures, the dwelling and the rear garden. The rear garden consists of hard standing at the rear of the dwelling, a lawn with non-native trees, three timber structures and mixed trees and hedgerows along the boundaries. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan has been carried out by PJC which details the individual trees and hedges in more detail in relation to their species. For the purposes of this assessment, it is noted that there will be a loss of two individual trees, alongside three small sections of groups.

6. POST-DEVELOPMENT BIODIVERSITY

The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of a new dwelling and associated landscaping. The new dwelling and paved areas will cover a similar footprint to the existing. However, a large portion of the existing front and rear paved areas will be removed and replaced with new shrub and hedge planting and a small ornamental pond. The existing vegetated garden will be enhanced to improve quality. The PEA and PRA also suggest the inclusion of; 2 bat bricks, 2 bee bricks, 2 swift bricks and 1 hedgehog nest box to further increase biodiversity within the site.

7. PROPOSED BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The project meets on-site requirements for hedgerow units at 11.89%. However, on-site habitat units are not met, at a loss of -14.39% habitat units. With the inclusion of off-site measures, the project can meet a net-gain of 10.04% in habitat units. Credits will be achieved through the creation of Lowland Meadows at Woodoaks Farm Habitat Bank, Rickmansworth (BGS - 270825001), which is within the same NCA.

8. CONCLUSION

The completed metric shows that the application can meet the required biodiversity net gain targets through the implementation of on-site hedgerow creation and off-site habitat creation.

9.APPENDIX: On-site Baseline Map



10.APPENDIX: On-site Proposed Map

