

Biodiversity Gain Plan

Boorley Park School, Nairn Road, Southampton, SO32 2SH

1. Introduction

This Biodiversity Gain Plan has been prepared in support of a planning application for the proposed construction of a new SEN building within the grounds of Boorley Park School, Nairn Road, Southampton, SO32 2SH. The document has been informed by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, the Biodiversity Net Gain metric calculation, and the grassland condition assessment. It sets out the baseline habitat resource, the forecast post-development biodiversity value, and the measures by which biodiversity net gain will be delivered, managed and monitored on site.

This plan is intended to accompany the planning submission and provide a clear record of the biodiversity baseline, the habitat assumptions used within the statutory metric, the proposed on-site habitat measures, and the framework for implementation and monitoring. It should be read alongside the ecological and landscape information submitted for the development.

2. Site and Development Details

The application site lies within the existing grounds of Boorley Park School at Nairn Road, Southampton, SO32 2SH. The development proposals relate to the construction of a new SEN building and associated works within the school campus. As the development is subject to the statutory biodiversity net gain requirement, the planning submission must demonstrate the biodiversity value of the pre-development site, the biodiversity value anticipated following implementation of the proposals, and the steps that will be taken to secure the required uplift.

3. Policy and Legislative Context

Biodiversity Net Gain is required under the Environment Act 2021 and is assessed using the statutory biodiversity metric. In general terms, development subject to the mandatory regime must secure at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the baseline position and must demonstrate how that gain will be maintained for the required management period. This Biodiversity Gain Plan has therefore been prepared to identify the relevant baseline habitats, summarise the metric outputs, and explain the delivery, management and monitoring measures that will secure the forecast on-site gain.

4. Baseline Biodiversity Conditions

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies the site as being of generally low ecological value within the context of the existing school grounds. No significant effects on statutory designated nature conservation sites are anticipated, subject to the application of standard construction good practice and pollution prevention measures. The habitats present on site are of low ecological importance, and the site was assessed as having negligible potential to support protected species such as bats, amphibians, reptiles and badgers. There remains potential for nesting birds to use surrounding vegetation and any vegetation removal should therefore be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season where practicable, or otherwise following appropriate ecological checks.

The baseline biodiversity value has been established using the statutory biodiversity metric informed by the habitat survey information and the grassland condition assessment. The metric identifies a total on-site baseline habitat area of 0.05 hectares, generating 0.1 baseline area habitat units. No baseline hedgerow units or watercourse units are recorded. The grassland condition assessment has informed the habitat condition assigned within the metric and provides the evidential basis for the baseline calculation used in this plan.

Baseline component	Value	Notes
On-site habitat area	0.05 ha	Baseline habitat area entered into the statutory metric.
Area habitat units	0.1	Calculated baseline area units.
Hedgerow units	0	No baseline hedgerow units recorded.
Watercourse units	0	No baseline watercourse units recorded.
Condition evidence	Grassland condition assessment	Used to support habitat condition assignment in the metric.

5. Metric Results and Net Gain Outcome

The Biodiversity Net Gain metric shows a forecast post-intervention on-site value of 0.150072 area habitat units, compared with a baseline of 0.1 area habitat units. This equates to a net increase of 0.050072 area habitat units, or a 50.07% uplift. In addition, the metric records a post-intervention hedgerow gain of 0.137240 units from a zero baseline, while no watercourse units are affected. On the basis of the

submitted metric calculation, the development exceeds the statutory requirement to secure a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain and does so through on-site measures.

Metric component	Baseline	Post-development	Net change
Area habitat units	0.1	0.150072	+0.050072 (50.07%)
Hedgerow units	0	0.137240	+0.137240
Watercourse units	0	0	No change
Outcome against statutory target	Minimum requirement	At least 10% net gain required	Requirement exceeded on site

6. Habitat Retention, Creation and Enhancement Measures

The biodiversity strategy for the development is based on the retention of suitable existing habitat where practicable, the control of ecological impacts during construction, and the creation and enhancement of habitats within the completed school grounds. The metric outputs indicate that habitat losses associated with the footprint of the new SEN building can be compensated through on-site habitat creation and landscaping, including the delivery of hedgerow planting and grassland-based habitat measures. The habitat proposals implemented on site should correspond directly with the post-development habitat assumptions used within the statutory metric.

- Retain existing habitats and boundary features where these are not affected by the development.
- Protect retained habitats during construction through clearly defined working areas, storage controls and pollution prevention measures.
- Create and establish the proposed replacement grassland and planted areas as shown on the post-intervention habitat layout used in the metric.
- Deliver hedgerow planting and associated establishment works to secure the hedgerow unit gain identified in the metric.
- Use native or wildlife-friendly planting where appropriate and ensure planting specifications are compatible with the target habitat types entered into the metric.

- Undertake any vegetation clearance outside the main bird nesting season where possible, or following inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist.

7. Habitat Delivery and Management

All habitat creation and enhancement works should be implemented in accordance with a detailed landscape and ecological specification and should be undertaken at the appropriate stage of the development programme, including planting during the first suitable planting season following completion of construction where relevant. Newly created and enhanced habitats must thereafter be managed so as to achieve and maintain the target habitat types and condition states assumed within the biodiversity metric. This is likely to require a programme of establishment watering, weed control, replacement planting, and longer-term management of grassland and hedgerow habitats to maintain their structure, species composition and function.

Habitat / feature	Target condition / outcome	Required management and maintenance	Timing / trigger	Remedial action if target not met
Retained grassland	Habitat retained in its planned extent and prevented from declining in condition.	Protect from construction damage, prevent storage or trafficking within retained areas, and manage by appropriate cutting and general maintenance to avoid deterioration.	Protection during construction and ongoing maintenance throughout the management period.	Repair damaged areas, relieve compaction where necessary, remove encroaching vegetation, and adjust cutting or maintenance regime.
Created or enhanced grassland	Successful establishment and achievement of the target grassland condition assumed in the metric.	Seed or turf in accordance with the approved specification, water during establishment as necessary, control undesirable weeds, replace failed areas, and implement an	Establishment in Years 1 to 2 and ongoing annual management thereafter.	Overseed or re-seed failed areas, increase weed control, review cutting frequency, and undertake additional establishment works.

		appropriate cutting regime.		
New hedgerow planting	Successful establishment of a continuous hedgerow delivering the forecast hedgerow units.	Plant in accordance with the approved specification, water during establishment, maintain weed-free bases, replace failures in the next planting season, and trim only as necessary to promote dense growth.	Planting in the first suitable season following construction and ongoing management thereafter.	Replace failed plants, infill gaps, improve watering and weed control, and revise maintenance where establishment is poor.
Trees and shrub planting	Successful establishment and long-term contribution to habitat structure and connectivity.	Water, stake and tie where necessary, maintain mulch or weed suppression, replace failures, and undertake formative pruning only where required.	Establishment in Years 1 to 3 with periodic inspection and maintenance thereafter.	Replace failed stock, renew supports, address weed competition, and undertake additional aftercare as required.
General habitat protection measures	Retained and newly created habitats protected from avoidable ecological harm.	Maintain defined working areas, apply pollution prevention measures, control runoff and dust, and programme vegetation clearance outside the bird nesting season or following ecological inspection.	Throughout site clearance, construction, and any maintenance works affecting habitats.	Stop damaging activities, implement corrective site controls, reinstate affected habitat, and seek ecological advice where incidents occur.

8. Ten-Year Management Timetable

Year	Management focus	Principal actions	Monitoring / review
Year 1	Implementation and establishment	Complete habitat creation and planting, protect retained habitats, commence watering, weed control, replacement planting, and initial grassland maintenance.	Establishment inspection by suitably qualified ecologist and review of any early failures.
Year 2	Early establishment	Continue aftercare for grassland, hedgerow, trees and shrubs, replace failed planting, and maintain construction protection measures where relevant.	Monitoring visit to assess establishment success and need for remedial works.
Year 3	Transition to managed growth	Maintain cutting regimes, weed control, hedgerow aftercare, and tree and shrub maintenance, with remedial planting where necessary.	Review progress toward target habitat condition and update management actions if needed.
Year 4	Condition progression	Continue habitat-specific management, including grassland maintenance and hedgerow development management.	Inspection to confirm habitats are developing in line with metric assumptions.
Year 5	Mid-period review	Maintain all habitat management measures and undertake any corrective actions identified through monitoring.	Formal review of management performance and remedial action plan if targets are not being met.
Year 6	Ongoing management	Continue established management regimes for retained and created habitats and replace any failed planting if required.	Periodic ecological check and maintenance review.

Year 7	Ongoing management	Maintain grassland, hedgerow, tree and shrub habitats in accordance with the approved management approach.	Inspection focused on habitat condition and structural development.
Year 8	Condition maintenance	Continue routine habitat management and implement any targeted remedial measures identified through monitoring.	Monitoring visit to confirm continued achievement of target condition trajectory.
Year 9	Pre-final review	Maintain habitats and address any late-stage condition issues or establishment failures.	Review of performance ahead of Year 10 assessment.
Year 10	Final timetable review year	Continue management measures and complete any final corrective works needed within the timetable period.	Ecological review to confirm condition status, management outcomes, and recommendations for any subsequent management period.

9. Monitoring and Reporting

The biodiversity net gain measures should be secured through the planning process and supported by monitoring over the required management period. Monitoring should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist at appropriate intervals to confirm whether retained, enhanced and newly created habitats are establishing in accordance with the target habitat types and condition assumptions used in the metric. Monitoring reports should record the management undertaken, identify any departures from the expected establishment trajectory, and set out any remedial actions required to ensure that the forecast biodiversity units are achieved and maintained.

10. Conclusion

Based on the ecological information currently available, the proposed SEN building at Boorley Park School is capable of delivering biodiversity net gain on site. The baseline habitats are of low ecological value and the statutory biodiversity metric indicates that the development would deliver a 50.07% uplift in area habitat units together with an additional hedgerow gain. Subject to implementation of the habitat creation, planting, protection, management and monitoring measures set out in this Biodiversity Gain Plan, the development is capable of meeting and exceeding the statutory requirement for a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.