ALPHA HOUSE, 24-27 REGIS ROAD, KENTISH TOWN

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

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July 2022

rpsgroup.com

Document status

Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review date
A	For planning	RN	HK	HK	June 2022
B	For planning	RN	HK	HK	June 2022
C	For planning	RN	HK	HK	June 2022
D	For planning	RN	HK	HK	July 2022

Approval for issue

[Name]	[Signature]	[Date]

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Prepared for:

Big Yellow Self Storage

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and scope of this report

1.1.1 RPS was commissioned by .Big Yellow Self Storage Company Ltd (BYSS) to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the re-development of Alpha House and the associated land, in support of the upcoming planning application.

1.1.2 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) survey was undertaken by RPS in March 2022, which found the site to comprise largely developed land (Alpha House and the associated hardstanding), with small amounts of modified (amenity) grassland, dense scrub and scattered trees.

1.1.3 This report addresses the concept of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and provides:

- Details of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map;
- Details of the baseline assessment of biodiversity units for habitats and hedgerows;
- Assessment of baseline ecological value and ecological value of the application site post-development;
- A summary of habitat enhancement and creation proposals designed to ensure that net gain is achieved; and
- Results of the overall net gain assessment demonstrating that net gain of >10% can be achieved compared with the pre-development baseline.

1.2 Biodiversity Net Gain and Methods

1.2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain is defined in Baker *et al* (2019)[1] as:

"Development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before"

1.2.2 The requirement for developments to seek to achieve BNG arises from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states in Para. 174 that:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by … minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity."

1.2.3 There is no single set method for quantifying the assessment of BNG, but one method is the use of biodiversity calculators to assess the biodiversity value of habitats pre- and post-development based on habitat type, distinctiveness and condition.

1.2.4 A biodiversity index is derived for the baseline and for the proposed development, and BNG is considered to be achieved where an increase in value is delivered (on or offsite), and where habitats of a higher value are not replaced exclusively with habitats of a lower value.

1.2.5 Defra made available its beta test update of its BNG assessment tool in July 2021, which was subsequently updated in May 2022 (to version 3.1). This tool has been used for the assessment in this report. The tool and associated documents were downloaded from http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720

r, J., Hoskins, R. & Butterworth, T. (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain – good practice principles for development.* Ciria, London.

2 PRE-DEVELOPMENT HABITATS

2.1 Results: Pre-development habitats

2.1.1 The habitats discussed within this section are shown on Figure 1.

Developed land (sealed surface)

2.1.2 Much of the site comprises developed land / sealed surfaces, such as Alpha House and the associated hardstanding, car parking areas. By default, this is not considered suitable for a condition assessment, and so, no further comment is necessary.

Modified grassland

2.1.3 Small areas of modified (improved) grassland were present around the site, which were maintained to be of a short sward height, and of a limited species composition. Based on the Natural England habitat condition guidance, this would be classified as being of a poor condition, as it meets only the following criteria:

- 6-8 species per m^2;
- Bracken cover less than 20%; and
- Physical damage evident in less than 5%.

Dense scrub

2.1.4 The site was found to comprise solely of bramble dominated dense scrub. By default, bramble scrub is classified as being of a medium distinctiveness and not suitable for a condition assessment; and so, no further assessment is required.

Scattered trees

2.1.5 A small number of scattered trees were present on site; these were considered to be of moderate condition, when assessing against the Natural England guidance.

3 POST-DEVELOPMENT HABITATS

3.1.1 This section of the report looks at the habitats which are to be created during the construction phase of the development and provides reasoning as to their habitat classification and condition category, as was completed for the pre-development habitats.

3.1.2 The habitats described below are labelled as they are on the Landscape Masterplan (Vector, 2022), for ease of understanding; their subsequent UKHabs / BNG classification is given within the text.

3.1.3 The habitats discussed within this section are shown on Figure 2.

3.2 Post-development habitats

Developed land / sealed surface

3.2.1 Post-development, 0.28 ha of the site will be comprised of developed land / sealed surfaces (i.e., the proposed building and associated hardstanding areas). Developed land and sealed surfaces, by default are not awarded a habitat condition, as there is no ecological value associated with them.

Meadow grassland

3.2.2 Areas of wildflower meadow grassland are to be included within the site. The wildflower meadow mix used will be the Emorsgate Special Meadow Mix (or something similar). This mix has a large number of meadow grass and herb species, and based on the composition, would most reasonably fall into the habitat condition category ‘other, semi-improved neutral grassland’.

3.2.3 The condition, when assessing against the condition criteria, would most likely fit into the moderate condition category, as it meets the following:

- Sward height is varied (it is expected that this will occur naturally through the diversity of species);
- Cover of bare ground between 1%-5%;
- Cover of bracken less than 20% and scrub less than 5%; and
- The absence of non-native, invasive species.

3.2.4 All wildflower mixes will be managed via annual mowing to no less than 15 cm height, in late summer, once flowers have set seed. All arisings will be removed offsite. The meadow grassland will provide habitat for invertebrates, which in turn, will provide a food source for common species of birds.

Intensive green roof

3.2.5 The green roof will be an intensive system, created using a wildflower meadow / grassland mix. The wildflower meadow mix used will be the Emorsgate Special Meadow Mix (or something similar). This mix has a large number of meadow grass and herb species, and it based on the composition, would most reasonably fall into the habitat condition category ‘other, semi-improved neutral grassland’.

3.2.6 The condition, when assessing against the condition criteria, would most likely fit into the moderate condition category, as it meets the following:

- Sward height is varied (it is expected that this will occur naturally through the diversity of species);

- Cover of bare ground between 1%-5%;
- Cover of bracken less than 20% and scrub less than 5%; and
- The absence of non-native, invasive species.

Native scrub / shrub planting

3.2.7 Areas of native scrub planting will be included around the site, post-development. This habitat would be awarded a moderate habitat condition, once established, as it meets the following criteria:

- A good age range of species;
- A well-developed edge; and
- Absence of non-native, invasive species.

Ornamental (introduced shrub) planting

3.2.8 Areas of ornamental planting will be included within the site, post-development. By default, such areas are not awarded a habitat condition, as there is no ecological value associated with them.

Scattered trees

3.2.9 New trees, totally 16 are to be included within the site, post-development. These will all be planted as standard, extra heavy trees and as per the Natural England guidance, will be of a moderate habitat condition, once fully established.

4 CONCLUSIONS / SUMMARY

4.1.1 The application site, pre-development, was comprised of low distinctiveness habitats, namely the bramble scrub and modified grassland.

4.1.2 Considering all of the above, the pre-development score for the application site is calculated to be **0.46** habitat biodiversity units.

4.1.3 When taking consideration of both the application site and off-site land, the result is a gain of **14.80%** of the pre-development score, which is above the 10% desired by the Environment Act.

4.1.4 There were no hedgerows on site, pre-development; however, 0.033 km of hedgerow is to be included within the scheme, post-development, representing an increase of **100%.**

4.1.5 It is recommended that a biodiversity audit be conditioned and carried out at relevant points throughout the project timeline (i.e, every five years). A template for a biodiversity audit is provided in Appendix A.

REFERENCES

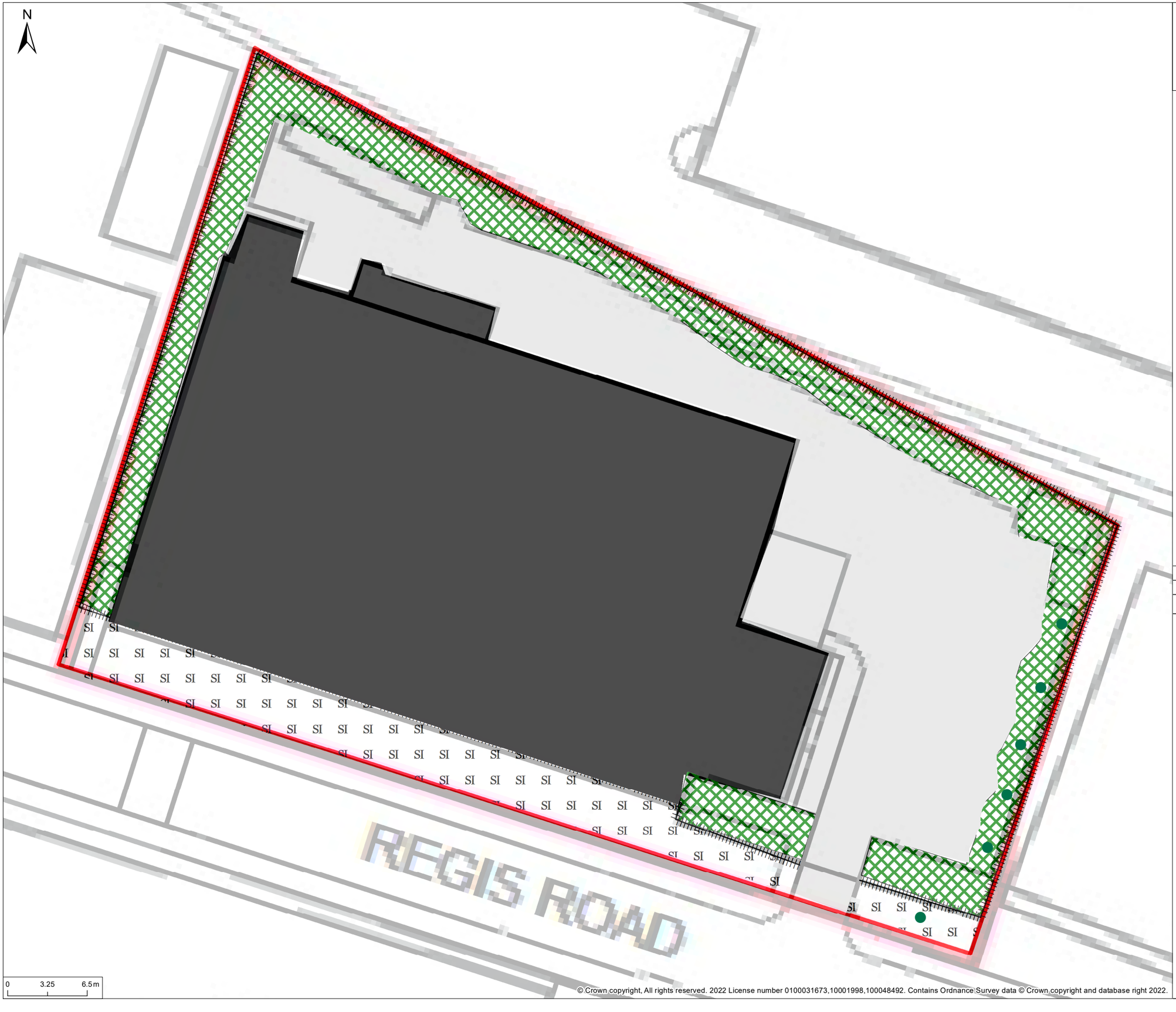
Baker, J., Hoskins, R. & Butterworth, T. (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain – good practice principles for development. Ciria, London

Butcher *et al.* (2018) UK Habitat Classification. Habitat Definitions Version 1.0. The UK Habitat Classification Working Group.

Panks, S., White, N., Newsome, A., Nash, M., Potter, J., Heydon, M., Mayhew, E., Alvarez, M., Russell, T., Cashon, C., Goddard, E., Scott, S.J., Heaver, M., Scott, S.H., Treweek, J., Butcher, B. and Stone, D. 2022. Biodiversity metric 3.1: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide. Natural England

RPS (2021) *BYSS Kentish Town: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.* RPS Southampton: Unpublished Report.

FIGURES



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Legend

Application boundary

Phase 1 habitat - polygon features

Habitat_code

- Buildings
- Hardstanding
- S.I Poor semi-improved grassland
- Scrub - dense/continuous
- Scattered trees

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date

MAKING COMPLEX EASY

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Client: Big Yellow Self Storage

Project: Alpha House, Regis Road, Kentish Town

Title: Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map

Status	Drawn By	PM/Checked By
DRAFT	HK	KS
Project Number	**Scale @ A3**	**Date Created**
ECO02386	1:295	MAR 2022

Figure Number: **3.2**

Rev: **-**

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Key:

SOFT LANDSCAPE

- Existing tree to be retained -refer to tree constraints plan CCL 11092
- Existing vegetation to be retained and enhanced
- Proposed Extra Heavy Standard Tree
- Proposed Multi Stem Trees
- Proposed Hedge
- Proposed Native Shrub Planting
- Proposed Ornamental Shrub Planting
- Meadow Mixture Area Emorsgate Mix EM8 or similar
- Wildflower to Roof Emorsgate Mix ER1F or similar

HARD LANDSCAPE

- Self Storage Service Yard - Asphalt
- Footpaths Building Entrance - Brushed Concrete
- Footpaths Building Entrance - Permeable Block Paving

FURNITURE

- Cycle Parking (Secure) - refer to Mountford Pigott drawing 2181-A-704
- Cycle Parking (Shelter) - Broxap Wardale Shelter (4no. racks) with swinging security gates or similar
- Cycle Stands - Sheffield cycle stand
- Bench - Broxap Litchard Seat or similar L1800mm x W510mm xH820mm
- GRP Enclosure - refer to Ribaform Products Ltd drawing DRG No. FPL/Big Yellow Group LTD 001

Urban Greening Factor Calculator

Surface Cover Type	Factor	Area (m²)	Contribution	Notes
Semi-natural vegetation (e.g. trees, woodland, species-rich grassland) maintained or established on site.	1	280	280	Existing areas of vegetation retained and enhanced and proposed areas of native shrub planting
Standard trees planted in connected tree pits with a minimum soil volume equivalent to at least two thirds of the projected canopy area of the mature tree.	0.8	13	10.4	Extra Heavy Trees and Multi Stem trees specified
Flower-rich perennial planting.	0.7	192.5	134.75	Flowering Lawn
Hedges (line of mature shrubs one or two shrubs wide).	0.6	40.5	24.3	Native Hedge
Extensive green roof of sedum mat or other lightweight systems that do not meet GRO Code 2014.	0.3	235	70.5	Green roof with wild flower seeding
Groundcover planting.	0.5	71	35.5	Ornamental Shrub Planting
Total contribution			**555.45**	
Total site area (m²)			3667	
Urban Greening Factor			**0.151472593**	

GP

GP

SUBSTATION

MH

MH

50°

Inset Roof Plan Scale 1:250

N

0 25m

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Rev	Date	Details	Drawn by	Checked by
P3	23.06.22	Green roof increased	NH	TG
P2	16.06.22	Staff seating area added	NH	TG
P1	09.06.22	Issued for comment	NH	TG
-	09.05.22	First Issue	NH	CG

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CLIENT: Big Yellow Self Storage

PROJECT: Alpha House, Regis Road, Kentish Town

TITLE: Landscape Masterplan - -

STATUS: INFORMATION

SCALE @ A1:	DATE:	DRAWN:	CHECKED:	APPROVED:
1:200	23.06.22	NH	CG	NH

JOB NO:	DRAWING NO:	REVISION:
22-0200	L001	P3

APPENDICES

A.1 Biodiversity Audit Guidance

A.1.1 Overview

This section of the report outlines the general principles that should be followed during a biodiversity audit, in line with the BNG Good Practice Principles (CIRIA-CIEEM-IEMA, 2016).

All developments that claim BNG (or to deliver a certain number of credits) should be open to an independent audit of the process and outcomes for the project.

Appropriate times for an audit may be present throughout the life cycle of the development, and will primarily assess:

- Progress with delivery of newly created habitats;
- Progress of delivery of restored / enhanced habitats; and
- Progress of delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain targets.

A.1.2 Monitoring of created habitats

Monitoring should be undertaken in years 1-5 to assess the development of the newly created habitats, such as the tree and scrub habitats. This monitoring will comprise walkover surveys. In year 1 the walkover survey will be carried out at the end of the year once habitat creation measures have been completed. In subsequent years, habitat condition will be monitored in June / July prior to the annual cut of grassland.

Further monitoring visits will be carried out in years 7, 10, 15, 20 and 30. The LEMP will be revised, if necessary, in years 5, 10 and 20.

In each visit, the following monitoring data will be collected:

- Extent of habitats; and
- Condition of habitats.

Photographs of the habitats will be taken, including photos taken from set points in each survey, for inclusion in the reports.

Habitat condition will be monitored as follows:

- Grassland: a species list will be compiled with DAFOR estimates of abundance for grass and flowering plant species. Presence and abundance of weed species also will be noted, and recommendations for control of weeds made if necessary. The assessment of condition in Year 10 will be used to determine whether habitat condition has improved to the extent where overseeding with meadow seed mix should be undertaken.
- Scrub / native shrub / scattered tree planting: Average height of planted scrub species will be recorded. During the aftercare period (years 1-5 after planting), the presence of any dead plants will be noted, along with damage /loss of tree guards.

A.1.3 Monitoring of Biodiversity Net Gain targets

Monitoring of progress to achieving BNG targets will be undertaken in years 5, 10, 20 and 30.

Information on habitat extent and condition collected during walkover surveys will be used in the Defra BNG metric calculator, to assess the biodiversity value of the site in years 5, 10, 20 and 30.

This will be compared to the target BNG value of the site as set out in RPS (2021), and progress towards achieving that target value for each habitat type will be assessed. Depending on the results of the

assessment, amendments to the LEMP will be made if it is judged necessary to amend management regimes in order to achieve the target biodiversity value.

A.1.4 Reporting

Reporting will comprise a report summarising results of the monitoring surveys in each year that monitoring is undertaken. At the end of each year in which monitoring takes place, the report will be made available to:

- The Local Planning Authority; and
- The developer and funder; or
- The appointed management company.

The LEMP will be updated and where necessary amended in years 5, 10 and 20. Copies of the amended LEMP will be made available to the above parties.

A.1.5 Contingencies / remedial measures

If monitoring identifies the requirement for remedial measures, this will be communicated to the landowner , along with their appointed management companies, via the mechanism of the monitoring reports.

Remedial actions would be required if:

- Monitoring indicates a failure of habitat creation;
- Monitoring indicates that habitat condition is poor and hence not achieving Net Gain targets unless further management is undertaken;
- Monitoring indicates that management actions are either not being undertaken or not being undertaken in accordance with the LEMP.

Where remedial actions are required, this will be set out in the monitoring reports. It will be the responsibility of the Developer to fund additional management actions if these are required, unless the actions are required because of a failure on the part of the management agent to implement the LEMP, in which case responsibility for funding would rest with the management agent.

It would be the responsibility of the management agent to implement revised management measures in the event that this is necessary.

A.1.6 Responsibilities and funding

BYSS will implement the works required and will be responsible for the future management of the land.