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Biodiversity Impact Calculation

Site Name

Westholme Clinic, Goring

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Client

Suk Maal

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Document Control

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Original	Emily Davies BSc (Hons)	Lynn Spencer BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM	15.04.26		

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About the Author

This report has been prepared by Emily Davies, an Assistant Ecologist at The Ecology Co-op. She has a BSc (Hons) in Zoology with Herpetology and previously worked in a veterinary practice. She started at The Ecology Co-op in 2025 and has been involved with and been the lead surveyor for various protected species surveys for a wide range of both homeowner and developer project proposals. As a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), she is bound by their code of professional conduct.

About the Reviewer

This report has been reviewed by Lynn Spencer, who is a Principal ecologist with 13 years' experience. She has a Level 1 bat survey license and has prepared several European Protected Species licenses for bats. As an Associate member of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), she is bound by their code of professional conduct.



Report Summary

Purpose	The Ecology Co-operation was commissioned by Suk Maal to undertake a Biodiversity Impact Calculation of a proposal to construct a new extension to the rear of the building, at Westholme Clinic, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, to quantify net change in biodiversity.
Summary of Losses and Gains	The proposed development scheme at this site will result in the loss of: On-site • 0.03ha of vegetated garden. The proposed development scheme at this site will retain: On-site • 0.1ha of buildings. • 0.071ha of developed land, sealed surface. • 0.171ha of vegetated garden. Post intervention the following habitats will be created: On-site • 0.018ha of biodiverse green roof of good condition. • 0.016ha of developed land, sealed surface.
Final Metric Results	The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation has demonstrated that the proposed scheme will results in a likely net gain of 0.04 habitat units (+10.28%) .
Does the scheme meet net gain requirements?	The current scheme does meet the 10% mandatory net gain value set out within the Environment Act 2021.



CONTENTS PAGE

1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Purpose of the Report	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 Summary of Previous Survey Work	5
1.4 Policy and Legislation.....	5
2 METHODOLOGY.....	6
2.1 Data Sources.....	7
3 RESULTS.....	7
3.1 Existing Habitats Assessment	7
3.2 Habitat Losses and Gains	8
4 CONCLUSIONS.....	9
APPENDIX 1 – Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets	Error! Bookmark not defined.



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Report

There has been a mandatory requirement for all new developments to demonstrate 'net gains' in biodiversity from the 12th February 2024, following the release of updated National Planning Policy Framework¹ by the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Environment Act 2021². A mandatory value of 10% net gain in biodiversity value for all developments (that do not meet exemption criteria) is required under the Environment Act 2021.

This document includes a baseline 'Biodiversity Impact Calculation' (BIC) for the proposed development at Westholme Clinic. The calculation utilises the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and assigns 'biodiversity units' to the pre-existing habitats contained within a proposed development site and those that are predicted to be lost, restored and/or created once the development has been constructed. This allows an objective comparison to be made between the existing biodiversity value of a given site and the predicted biodiversity value post development, with the net change in biodiversity value subsequently quantified.

The purpose of this document is to present the findings of the BIC based on the most up-to date existing habitat survey information and the most current outline plans for the proposed development of the site. BICs provide an evidence base for discussions between the ecological consultant, developer and the local planning authority regarding on-site avoidance, on-site mitigation and off-site compensation requirements.

This report will be used in relation to a proposal to construct a new extension to the rear of the building. Given the likelihood of proposed changes in the design scheme, some of the recommendations will potentially be subject to change. The results of the BIC are deemed accurate for the most recent layout plan.

This report was commissioned and produced at the request of Suk Maal.

Background

The site measures 0.37ha in area, and comprises an existing building, a small car park and a vegetated garden.

The site was subject to a preliminary ecological appraisal in February 2026 by The Ecology Co-op.

Habitats (UKHAB) within the site and along the site boundaries are shown in (

¹ HM Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf.

² HM Government (2021). Environment Act 2021 Available online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>



Figure 1), these include:

- Buildings.
- Developed Land, Sealed Surface.
- Vegetated Garden.



Figure 1. UKHAB map showing existing habitats within the site. The site boundary is indicated with a red line. Produced using QGIS software, version 4.06.3 – Hannover.

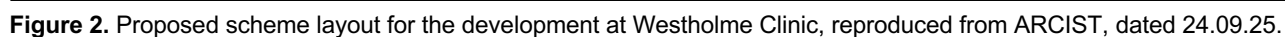




Figure 3. UKHAB map showing proposed habitats within the site. The site boundary is indicated with a red line. Produced using QGIS software, version 4.06.3 – Hannover.

Summary of Previous Survey Work

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal with UKHab³, completed by The Ecology Co-op in February 2026, identified the potential for no protected species to be present on the site.

Policy and Legislation

NPPF (2024)

The NPPF sets out the Government's view on how planners should balance nature conservation with development and helps ensure that Government meets its biodiversity commitments with regards to the operation of the planning system.

Paragraph 187d, states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment by:

- *"minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures."*

Paragraph 192b, states that to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should;

³ The Ecology Co-op (2026). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal UKHab survey. – P11432



- “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.”

Paragraph 193d, states that when determining planning applications, authorities should apply the following principle:

- “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.”

Environment Act (2021)

The Environment Act sets a target of halting the decline in species through the inclusion of a legally binding 2030 species abundance target. Aiming to restore natural habitats and enhance biodiversity, the Act requires new developments to improve or create habitats for nature (through mechanisms such as mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain), and tackle deforestation. Going forwards, UK businesses will need to look closely at their supply chains as amongst other measures they will be prohibited from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation. Woodland protection measures are also strengthened through the Act.

METHODOLOGY

This Biodiversity Impact Calculation uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool published by Natural England⁴. This is used to calculate ‘habitat units’ and ‘hedgerow units’ by multiplying the area (ha) or lengths (km), ‘distinctiveness’ (habitat type), ‘condition’ (quality), and strategic significance (location in relation to the authority’s local strategy) of each habitat parcel.

The calculation provides a negative value to the biodiversity units where habitat is being directly lost to development. Where habitats are enhanced or created on-site, or off-site, the calculation gives a positive value but adds risk factors that account for uncertainty - difficulty in creating new habitats and time delays while they establish; habitats that are more difficult to restore or that will take a long time to reach a set target condition will score lower and therefore make a smaller positive contribution.

Where on-site gains are equal to or larger than the losses, the project is deemed to have neutral biodiversity impact or biodiversity ‘net gain’ respectively.

Where on-site gains do not outweigh on-site losses and a biodiversity ‘net loss’ is calculated, this becomes an ‘offset requirement’. Offsets can be provided by further habitat creation or enhancement in-situ or elsewhere and are assessed using the same metric to balance the predicted gains against the losses to ensure no net loss will be achieved. It follows that a biodiversity net gain can still be achieved by providing higher biodiversity gains through the offset than the net loss resulting from the development.

Note that the metric does not allow for ‘trading down’; one of the key principles in measuring biodiversity net losses or gains is that habitats of high ecological importance cannot be offset by the creation of larger areas of habitats with lower value. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool includes a ‘trading down correction’ that deducts the number of biodiversity units that are not accounted for through the creation of equivalent high

⁴ Natural England (2023) *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool*. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>



distinctive habitats than that lost. For example, the loss of a small area of lowland meadow priority habitat (high distinctiveness) will not be offset by a larger area of modified grassland (medium distinctiveness) and will only be offset by an equivalent area of habitat of the same distinctiveness or higher.

Data Sources

This calculation uses the most up to date survey information, using botanical data gathered during the site visit in February 2026. The areas of each habitat category were measured using GIS mapping tools (QGIS). Condition assessments were made in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition assessments document⁵ and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric: draft user guide⁶. Applying the precautionary principle, a presumption for the higher condition was used where there was any uncertainty in the condition of existing habitats.

To predict habitat/hedgerow units supported after by the site after completion of the development, the aerial imagery was overlaid by the proposed scheme layout (see Figure 2). This allowed direct losses of habitats to be measured where the built environment overlaps with pre-existing habitat, with gardens and amenity areas treated separately. The habitats that are 'created' after development are assumed to achieve the highest level of condition as appropriate; a separate landscape and enhancement plan should be produced to ensure this condition is achieved.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool uses a separate calculator spreadsheet for linear features. This works under the same principles as above but replaces areas of habitat with linear length of a feature. It should be noted that because linear features often have higher ecological importance, linear habitats are assigned higher distinctiveness and must be offset with other linear features. The hedgerow units generated for linear features are not equivalent or interchangeable with biodiversity calculations for areas of habitat.

RESULTS

Existing Habitats Assessment

A summary of habitats and condition assessments is provided in Table 1. Full results of condition assessments for habitats which require it (using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition assessment document) are provided in Appendix 1.

Overall, the on-site calculated baseline is 0.40 habitat units.

Table 1. Existing habitat conditions for Westholme Clinic.

Habitats		Condition Assessments
UK Habitat (UKHAB) Classification System	Location/Reference (habitat parcels split if multiple areas with different condition assessments)	Condition
Developed land; sealed surface	Site entrance, north of the site primarily.	N/A
Buildings	Largest habitat parcel on the site.	N/A
Vegetated Garden	To the west and south of the building.	N/A

⁵ Natural England (2023) *Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments* Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

⁶ Natural England (2023). *Statutory Biodiversity Metric draft user guide*. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>



Habitat Losses and Gains

The proposed development scheme at this site will result in the loss of:

On-site

- 0.03ha of vegetated garden.

The proposed development scheme at this site will retain:

On-site

- 0.1ha of buildings.
- 0.071ha of developed land, sealed surface.
- 0.171ha of vegetated garden.

Post intervention the following habitats will be created:

On-site

- 0.018ha of biodiverse green roof of good condition.
- 0.016ha of developed land, sealed surface.

The overall results of the calculations are presented in Table 2. Please refer to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool supplied with this document (submitted separately) for full details of the calculation.

Table 2. Headline results of the Biodiversity Impact Calculation for the proposed development at Westholme Clinic.

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.40	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.44	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.04	10.28%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Area 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)	Area habitat units	0.04	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area 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)	Area habitat units	0.04	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	10.28%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		



CONCLUSIONS

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation has demonstrated that the proposed scheme will results in a likely net gain of **0.04 habitat units (+10.28%)**.

The current scheme does satisfy the trading rules within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology Co-op.