Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Former Red Lion
44 Main Street
Egremont
Cumbria
CA22 2AD

Prepared for: Cumberland Council
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DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Executive Summary		
Background		In July 2025 Natural Ecology were instructed to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal and biodiversity net gain assessment of Former Red Lion, 44 Main Street, Egremont CA22 2AD, (central grid reference NY 01110 10642, What3Words: ///stunner.messy.iron).
Site Description		The site comprises of a plot of land that formerly comprised the Red Lio Hotel building and hardstanding, which has since been demolished. Demolition rubble is present on the waste ground which has now begun to grow some successional ruderal growth. On the northern edge of the site is a building due to be renovated, but it is not included in this Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. The results would remain unchanged if it were included, for reference.
Development Proposal		Development proposals include relandscaping the site to create an area of gardens that can be used by the residents of Egremont and any visitors to the area, including planters and trees.
Outcome of BNG Assessment		The site achieves biodiversity net gain. The onsite total net unit change is +0.08 area habitat units (17.04% change). There are no hedgerow or river habitats on site.
Recommendations		All trading rules are satisfied and as such, no design changes are recommended at this time. Should design plans change, recalculation will be required.
Conclusions		Provided the recommendations within this report are followed and the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement is implemented throughout the detailed design process, potential negative effects from development on important ecological features will be negligible.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 Natural Ecology were commissioned by Cumberland Council to undertake a biodiversity net gain assessment at Former Red Lion, 44 Main Street, Egremont CA22 2AD (central grid reference NY 01110 10642, What3Words:///stunner.messy.iron) in July 2025 (hereafter referred to as the 'Building/Site').

1.2 Currently the site comprises demolition material from the former pub that was sited there, which has begun to have successional growth. This survey was therefore commissioned to provide a baseline of floral and faunal diversity and to assess whether any protected or notable species will be impacted by the proposed works.

1.3 The aim of this report is to inform the planning application for relandscaping of the site to create a garden-style public open space for the benefit of the residents of Egremont and any visitors to the area.

Purpose

1.4 The purpose of this report is to carry out a biodiversity net gain assessment using the latest Biodiversity Metric and provide options for onsite compensation that would secure an overall net gain in biodiversity for the scheme.

Planning Policy

1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the requirements for the delivery of BNG, and this is supported within Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). In particular the PPG promotes the delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain (BNG) through the creation and enhancement of habitats alongside development.

1.6 Mandatory BNG was introduced by the Environment Act in November 2021. Whilst the Environment Act (2021) sets out the framework for BNG, mandatory BNG as set out in the Environment Act will apply in England only by amending the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) and is to become law in November 2023. Notwithstanding this timetable, planning authorities are increasingly requesting that BNG is tested using Natural England's biodiversity Metric.

2. METHODS

Personnel

2.1 This report was produced by Lucinda Spencer, who is experienced in ecological consultancy including the production of detailed ecological impact assessments and habitat enhancements including biodiversity net gain assessments.

Habitat Survey and Condition Assessment

2.2 Habitats present onsite were assessed by Natural Ecology, utilising information gathered during a walkover in July 2025. Classification of area habitats was carried out in accordance with the methods outlined in the latest Biodiversity Metric for input into the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculator, based upon the UK Habitat Classification descriptions of habitats.

2.3 The frequency and cover of each species identified as they are distributed in each habitat is estimated using the DAFOR scale, as follows:

- Dominant - >75% cover;
- Abundant – 51-75% cover;
- Frequent – 26-50% cover;
- Occasional – 11-25% cover;
- Rare – 1-10% cover; and
- Locally dominant (LD), abundant (LA) and frequent (LF) is also used where distribution is patchy.

Baseline Habitats

2.4 Classification of area habitats was carried out in accordance with the methodology outlined in the latest Biodiversity Metric for input into the Biodiversity Metric calculator, based upon the UK Habitat Classification descriptions of habitats.

2.5 The results of this and the habitat mapping using the GIS software were input into the Biodiversity Metric calculation tool, submitted alongside this report.

Proposed Habitats

2.6 The areas of the habitats were calculated by georeferencing the site plan (shown within the appendices) and digitising estimated habitats using QGIS software. Habitat categories were assigned to the most rational category based upon The Biodiversity Metric. Future conditions of habitats were assumed based upon professional judgement.

2.7 Where current deficits in biodiversity units are identified, options to achieve no net loss whilst satisfying trading rules and implementing the mitigation hierarchy are recommended in accordance with the best practice guidance.

3. Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Baseline Habitats

3.1 The results of this and the habitat mapping were input into the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation tool, submitted alongside this report.

3.2 The study area comprises a limited range of habitats that can be broadly classified under the following habitat categories:

- Modified grassland
- Non-native hedgerow
- Urban – buildings/vacant or derelict land
- Line of Trees/Scattered trees.

3.3 The dominant habitat is urban in nature comprising vacant/derelict land. Some sealed surface is also present with modified grassland and a single tree.

3.4 The modified grassland, dominated by fast-growing grasses. It has an abundance of perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and White Clover *Trifolium repens*. Other species include Timothy *Phleum pratense*, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and chickweed *Stellaria media*..

Table 1 below details the individual habitat blocks and their classification including both the Phase 1 and UK habitat Classification type.

Table 1 – Baseline Biodiversity Units			
Habitat	Area	Condition	Biodiversity Units
Area-based Habitat	Area (ha)		
Vacant or derelict land	0.156	Poor	0.31
Developed land; sealed surface	0.09	N/A	0.00
Grassland: Modified Grassland	0.005	Poor	0.01
Urban Tree	0.0163	Moderate	0.13
Total Area-based Habitats	**0.27**	**N/A**	**0.45** (accounting for rounding)

Post-development Habitat Type and Classification

3.5 The proposed development includes the relandscaping of the site. To achieve net gain, it is recommended that planting of native wildlife-friendly tress is undertaken. The areas of habitats were calculated by georeferencing a plan received from the project architect and digitising estimated habitats using QGIS software. Habitat categories were assigned to the most rational category based upon The Biodiversity Metric. Future conditions of habitats were assumed based upon professional judgement.

3.6 The DEFRA metric 4.0 habitats for the proposed development are summarised in Table 2 and 3 below:

Table 2 – Retained Habitats Within Proposed Development			
Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition	Biodiversity Units Lost
Retained area			
Urban Tree	0.0163	Moderate	0.00
Developed land; sealed surface	0.09	N/A	0.00
Total retained	**0.083**		**0.00**

Table 3 – Created Area-based Habitats Within Proposed Development			
Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition	Biodiversity Units
Created area			
Developed land: sealed surface	0.131	N/A	0.00
Introduced shrub	0.014	N/A	0.03
Urban tree	0.0855	Good	0.33
Ground level planters	0.003	N/A	0.01
Modified grassland	0.011	Moderate	0.04
Total created habitats	0.24		**0.40** (accounting for rounding)

3.7 Table 4 shows the headline results of the biodiversity net gain assessment:

Table 4 – Onsite Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Summary of Results		
Onsite baseline.	Habitat units.	0.45
Onsite post-intervention.	Habitat units.	0.53
Onsite total net unit change.	Habitat units.	**+0.08**
Onsite net % change.	Habitat units.	**+17.04%**
Trading rule issues.	Deficit in habitat units	**0**

3.8 The habitats within the site are of sufficient quality to achieve the conditions as assessed within these calculations. Information on how to achieve the credits required for net gain follows in the next section.

4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

4.1 The development proposal has been tested using the latest Natural England Biodiversity Metric and follows guidance set out within the User Guide. This assessment has been made based on the proposal of current information.

4.2 The majority of the habitats are currently relatively low in value, comprising vacant/derelict land, hardstanding. Some of this habitat will be replaced on site to make way for paving and planters and a number of trees. It is recommended that the trees are native species, however it is understood that this may not be the most pragmatic for this site.

4.3 This translates to a **+17.04% gain** in habitat.

5. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Natural England. (March 2023). Natural England Joint Publication JP039 Biodiversity Metric , Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity: User Guide.
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6593707725029376

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

ODPM (2005) Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system.

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA. (2016). Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Biodiversity-Net-Gain-Principles.pdf

BSi (2021). Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain – Specifications. BS 8683:2021

Butchers, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020) The UK Habitat Classification user Manual Version 1.1 at http://www.ukhab.org/

APPENDICES


Lamb Lane
Lamb Lane
Beck Green Car Park
Main Street
Play Strategy
KEY
1-Boardwalk
2-Tree stumps and balance beams
3-Embankment slide with two approaches; stepped boulders or notched log ladder
4-Bridges over rain garden
5-Toddler playhouse
6-Traversing wall
7-Log stills
re-form
landscape architecture