

### Biodiversity Net Gain

An updated metric and BNG assessment have been provided. They have also provided a biodiversity gain plan, though this is premature given the off-site measures are yet to be confirmed and the on-site measures may change.

Updated Metric and BNG assessment – There are no obvious issues with the update metric. There are now no post development proposals where the target condition is good, reducing the risk of failure of on-site measures. The highest risk of failure is now associated with the mixed scrub achieving moderate condition given the small area of habitat proposed making two of condition criteria unachievable ie glades and edge effect. ie the other three will now all need to pass to achieve moderate condition.

They are still regarding the area of Japanese knotweed as unvegetated unsealed surface and have now provided justification.

Their opinion is that as only Japanese knotweed is present the site has no baseline value. Whilst I can see merit in this argument, I am not sure whether we can accept this. If, however I amend to urban derelict land, the metric only shows a deficit of 0.02 units to achieve 10%. I am therefore satisfied at this stage that no further information is required and I will take advise internally on whether or not we regard the argument as reasonable or not as whilst I accept there is no vegetated value (assuming no vegetation beneath the Japanese knotweed) it will still provide cover for wildlife ie has more value than genuine unvegetated ground. *We may therefore require this amendment at discharge of the statutory gain condition.*

I would note that the on-site proposals do include significant habitat creation as defined by defra. The draft gain plan states no. This is in part that the gain plan wording is misleading stating on-site enhancement. Guidance does however indicate that this means enhancement and creation. An on-site 30 year Habitat Mangemetn and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will therefore be required for the other neutral grassland, mixed scrub and urban trees. Given over 2 units are being generated on the site we would recommend that this is controlled by a section 106, but this ultimately for the LPA to decide. ie the HMMP could be controlled by a standard condition if the LPA preferred.

For the off-site proposals, on land within their ownership elsewhere in the Borough, an HMMP will also be required in order to register the site with defra along with a legal agreement with a third party such as the LPA. If the legal agreement is with the LPA, the GMEU is able to advise on the suitability of the HMMP.

In order to discharge the statutory biodiversity gain condition they will need to provide:

- The finalised biodiversity gain plan,
- Have the off-site units are registered with defra,
- Final version of the statutory metric and
- An agreed version of the HMMP.