

Biodiversity Net Gain

An updated metric using the correct version has been provided for the full application part of the development. This currently only achieves 8.8% Net gain, with a shortfall of just 0.01BU to achieve 10% net gain. I note that the metric includes 24 trees. There appears however to be the potential to have 27 individual trees based on the site layout with some multi-stemmed shrubs proposed. If these are substituted for trees then having run the calculation more than 10% BNG will be achieved. I would however note that the BNG assessment has been run on the assumption that 70% of the trees are native. This is not the case at present with only around 50% being native.

Overall however it can be seen that 10% BNG is achievable on the site if just 3 more trees are planted and the schedule amended to include 70% native. I am therefore satisfied that the full part of the application can discharge the statutory Biodiversity condition. The habitats creation sites are however reliant on the urban trees and other neutral grassland both medium distinctiveness habitats. Based on defra guidance these habitats are classed as significant, I would therefore recommend that a legal agreement is signed with the developer to ensure the individual trees and grassland are maintained in the target condition for 30 years.

No metric appears to have been provided for the outline part of the development. Whilst the outline part does not have to demonstrate that 10% is achievable at this stage, it is required to provide a habitat baseline and indicative post development value for the site and proposals on how 10% will be achieved. Given 10% is only just achievable on the full part of the site that only has low value habitat in poor condition, it is less likely that the outline phase will achieve 10% BNG on the site given some higher value habitats are present along the southern boundary.