Appendix 3 - Summary of Biodiversity Net Gain from proposals

Whilst the approach to Grounds Maintenance can be changed to target improving biodiversity in response to the Biodiversity Emergency, measuring any improvement is not straightforward. Any measurement is effectively a proxy and indicative at best.

The current best available tool is considered to be the **Defra Biodiversity Metric 3.0 calculator**.

This tool has recently been introduced to assist Local Planning Authorities with assessing development proposals in the planning process, to evidence that a proposed development is delivering a net gain for biodiversity – this typically taking account of habitat lost to development, and new habitat created or enhanced onsite or offsite.

In the case of the Council greenspaces the tool has been used as a basis of calculation of habitat units for the existing habitats, and to estimate habitat units taking account of proposed measures to enhance existing or to create new habitat (if cut and collect management was implemented, trees planted and new wildflower areas created).

The areas included in the calculation are based on the proposed Grounds Maintenance layer available at https://maps.swdevon.gov.uk/wm/Map.aspx?MapName=SHWD. The habitat calculations are applied on a generalised basis and are intended to be indicative as opposed to exact (to undertake this exercise would be unduly prohibitive in terms of time and cost). The following generalisations and omissions are noted:

- A minority of sites may not fall into the generalised categories assigned to the habitat in the calculator.
- The type of 'enhanced' grassland sites have not been distinguished i.e. between newly sown wildflower areas, or sites at which cut and collect is being introduced and where the natural wildflower seedbank is being given a chance to show once nutrient levels are reduced.
- Areas of existing woodland and hedgerows have not been incorporated, due in part to complexity, and because it is not anticipated that there will be a change to management of these habitat types.
- Existing habitat has been categorised as of poor condition, low ecological connectivity and of and as habitat not within a local strategy (i.e. not of strategic significance).
- Enhanced and newly created habitat applies a worst case scenario namely assigning this habitat as 'poor' condition, with low ecological connectivity, and of as habitat of low strategic significance. The one exception being newly planted 'standard' trees, for which a condition of moderate has been applied reflecting the level of aftercare they will receive.
- The full biodiversity value of the tree planting takes some time to be realised.

Applying the generalised assessment, the headline results indicates that the proposed measures could deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of c.35% by 2025.

Adding the proposed tree planting to the calculation noting that the biodiversity value would not be realised until after 2025, would result in a Biodiversity Net Gain value of c.45%.

The following headline results and calculation images taken from the Defra calculator reflect all proposed changes (i.e. incorporating the tree planting).

Headline Results Return to results menu				
	Habitat units	94.00		
On-site baseline	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	River units	0.00		
0 '' '' ''	Habitat units	136.48		
On-site post-intervention	Hedgerow units	0.00		
(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	River units	0.00		
0 ' 0/ 1	Habitat units	45.19%		
On-site net % change	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	River units	0.00%		
	Habitat units	0.00		
Off-site baseline	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	River units	0.00		
0.00 1	Habitat units	0.00		
Off-site post-intervention	Hedgerow units	0.00		
(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	River units	0.00		
m . t . t . t	Habitat units	42.48		
Total net unit change	Hedgerow units	0.00		
(including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	River units	0.00		
	Habitat units	45.19%		
Total on-site net % change plus off-site surplus	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
(including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	River units	0.00%		
Trading rules Satisfied?	3	?es		

Existing baseline habitat

Habitats and areas		Distinctiveness Condition Strategic significance			Ecological baseline	ne Retention category biodiversity value							
Broad habitat	Habitat type	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Suggested action to address habitat losses	Total habitat units	Area retained	Area enhanced	Baseline units retained	Baseline units enhanced	Area lost	Units lost
Grassland	Modified grassland	47	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	94.00	24.8	20	49.60	40.00	2.20	4.40
		47.00		94.00	24.80	20.00	49.60	40.00	2.20	4.40			

Habitat creation (newly planted trees – whips, and planting of standards)

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Post development/ post intervention habitats											
Broad Habitat			Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Temporal multiplier	Difficulty				
	Proposed habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Standard or adjusted time to target condition	Final time to target condition/years	Final difficulty of creation	Habitat units delivered		
Woodland and forest	Other woodland; broadleaved	2.2	Medium	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Standard time to target condition applied	5	Low	7.36		
Urban	Urban Tree	0.3	Medium	Moderate	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Standard time to target condition applied	27	Low	0.92		
	Total area	2.20							8.28		

Habitat enhancement (including long grass cut and collect, verge cut and collect and new wildflower areas)

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Baseline habitats	Proposed Habitat (Pre-Populated but can be overridden)		Proposed Habitat (Pre-Populated but can be overridden) Area Area				Strategic significance	Temporal risk multi	Difficulty risk multipliers	Habitat units		
Baseline habitat	Proposed Broad Habitat	Proposed habitat	Distinctiveness change	Condition change	(hectares)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Standard or adjusted time to target condition	Final time to target condition/years		
Grassland - Modified grassland	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	Low - Medium	Lower Distinctiveness Habitat - Poor	20	Medium	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Standard time to target condition applied	1	Low	78.60
												78.60