

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	
On-site baseline	Habitat units	94.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	River units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention <small>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	136.48	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	River units	0.00	
On-site net % change <small>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	45.19%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	River units	0.00%	
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	River units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention <small>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	River units	0.00	
Total net unit change <small>(including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	42.48	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	River units	0.00	
Total on-site net % change plus off-site surplus <small>(including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	45.19%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	River units	0.00%	
Trading rules Satisfied?	Yes		

