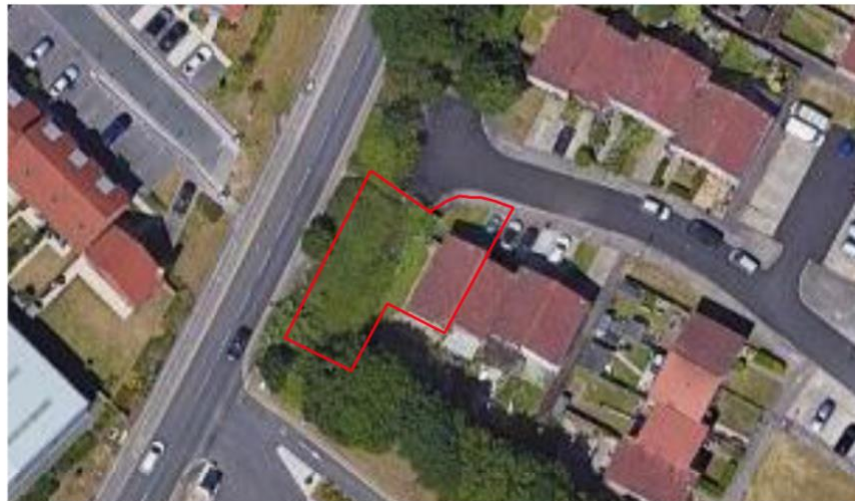


Biodiversity Net Gain Outcome and Deficit Management



Project Title: Land adjacent to 40 Heros Walk,
RG2 8TY
Site address: 40 Heros Walk, RG2 8TY
Grid ref: SU716693
Client: Loddon Property Limited
Prepared by: Noa Girdler, Ecologist, CIEEM
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Date: 14/02/2026
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1. Executive Summary

Noa Girdler was commissioned by Loddon Property Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for land adjacent to 40 Heros Walk, Reading, RG2 8TY (hereafter referred to as the site).

The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (2023) to evaluate the change in biodiversity value resulting from the proposed development.

The site measures approximately 0.0337 Hectares (337m²) and currently comprises a graveled, unvegetated private garden area (0.0097 ha) with sparse ephemeral vegetation, an unmanaged bramble-dominated scrub area (0.0136 Ha) and 1 dwelling know as No. 40 Heros Walk (0.0063 Ha).

The proposed development involves the construction of:

A single residential dwelling (approximately 67.3 m² footprint, 0.0067 Ha), private garden (approximately 66.25 m², 0.0066 Ha), Driveway and other hard surfaces (62.5 m², 00.62 Ha). The proposed plans also include: shrub borders , permeable paving in both patio and new driveway, proposed new tree planting to the front of the property as well as proposed 3 new native tree planting to the adjacent amenity land under Reading Borough Council ownership to improve and enhance landscape buffer strip.

The site does not consist of any irreplaceable habitats or protected species.

Using the Metric tool in accordance and compliance with DEFRA's latest version, the site shows an overall decreases in habitats with a change of -74.44% of Biodiversity. This change is expected on a small site such as this due to the constraints of a small scale urban site as well as the 30 year management plan which couldn't be applicable in this case.

The landscaping plans for this suggested dwelling will include: planting of 1 new tree to the front of the property, adding areas of shrub to the front and side as well as enhancing the verge which is under Reading Borough Council ownership, between Heros Walk and Basingstoke road by planting new trees.

All landscaping additions cannot be directly used to offset the losses in the Metric tool due to the management plans and regulations regarding private gardens.

The BNG assessment identified a deficit of –0.05 scrub habitat units resulting from the removal of the unmanaged scrub. Due to the small scale and urban constraints of the site, onsite habitat creation cannot fully offset this loss. The Metric tool is requiring 0.07 Scrub habitat units (or equivalent) as compensation for the removal of the Scrub from an offsite provider

To achieve compliance with the statutory 10% net gain requirement, the client intends to purchase equivalent biodiversity units offsite through an accredited habitat banks. Several providers have confirmed availability of suitable scrub units within the region.

Conclusion: The proposed development will achieve full compliance with statutory and local BNG requirements through offsite compensation.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Noa Girdler was commissioned by Loddon Property Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for land adjacent to 40 Heros Walk, Reading (RG2 8TY). The site covers approximately 0.0337 hectares (337 m²) and is the subject of a planning application to construct a single new dwelling with associated driveway and garden.

The purpose of this report is to:

Establish the baseline biodiversity value of the site;

Assess the potential biodiversity impacts of the proposed development;

Determine whether the project meets the 10% net gain target required under the Environment Act 2021 and relevant local planning policy.

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2.2 Site Description

The site currently comprises:

Unvegetated private garden (0.0097 ha) – A graveled surface with ephemeral/short perennial vegetation and occasional weeds currently used by 40 Heros Walk as a side access to a private garden.

Unmanaged scrub area (0.0136 Ha) – Dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), which will need be cleared to enable this development. This area is part of a verge between Basingtoke Road and Heros Walk.

Adjacent to the red-line boundary are areas of dense scrub and ruderal vegetation containing ivy (*Hedera helix*), silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*), bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), and two small trees (ash and elder).

No protected species or priority species were identified.

2.3 Legislative and Policy Context

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with:

Environment Act 2021 – Establishing mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain for development.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023) – Sections 179–182 promoting measurable net gain.

DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.0 March 2023 – Standardized approach for quantifying biodiversity units.

The local planning authority (Reading Borough Council) requires developments to demonstrate measurable BNG either onsite, offsite, or through statutory biodiversity credits.

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3. Methodology

The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (March 2023) was used to assess biodiversity value.

The process involved:

1. Desk study was undertaken by Noa Girdler. The findings for this survey can be found in the PEA report undertaken for this site.

The Site is not within any designated sites. No protected species or priority species were identified in the desk study as well as the field survey.

1. Habitat Identification: Using field observations and aerial imagery. A site walkover was taken by Noa Girdler, Ecologist, on 10/09/2025.

2. Condition Assessment: Based on DEFRA's condition criteria.

3. Calculation of Units: Quantifying baseline and post-development habitat units.

4. Comparison of Results: Determining the net change in biodiversity value.

4. Baseline Biodiversity Assessment

Habitat Type Area (ha) Distinctiveness Condition Baseline Units:

Unvegetated Garden	0.0097Ha	V. Low, Poor
Scrub	0.0136Ha	Medium, Moderate

Total 0.0223Ha

There are no trees or hedgerows within the red boundary line.

The site's overall post development habitat units show a deficit of –0.05 units, with 0.07 units required, predominantly from the removal of the unmanaged scrub area.

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5. Proposed Development and Post-Development Habitats

The proposed development will consist of:

One new detached residential dwelling (67.26 m² footprint).

Hard standing and permeable patio and parking area (62.5 m²).

Private rear garden (66.25 m²) Lawn and shrub border.

Frontage soft landscaping shrubs and one tree (14.7 m²).

Prior to the development commencement, all the unmanaged scrub will need to be removed. The landscape scheme will include small-scale ornamental and native planting, providing limited biodiversity value.

Habitat Type Area (ha) Distinctiveness Condition Post-Development Units:

Developed land; sealed surface	0.0063	V.Low
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0067	V.Low
Vegetated garden	0.0066	Low
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0062	V.Low
Vegetated garden	0.0014	Low
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0049	V.Low

Total 0.0337 Ha

6. BNG Calculation Summary

The Metric tool shows a change in Habitat Units of -74.44%

This change is expected on a small site such as this due to the constraints of a small scale urban site as well as the 30 year management plan which wouldn't be viable on private land residential dwelling.

The assessment shows a unit deficit of -0.05 scrub habitat units and 0.07 units required to offset the loss of habitat.

Area habitat summary	
Total Net Unit Change	-0.04
Total Net % Change	-74.44%
Trading Rules Satisfied	No - check trading summaries ▲
Area Check	Area Acceptable ✓

Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
0.06	0.07	0.05
0.00	0.00	0.00
0.00	0.00	0.00

7. Mitigation Hierarchy

The development design has followed the mitigation hierarchy as set out in national guidance:

1. Avoidance: Retention of boundary vegetation where feasible.
2. Minimization: Inclusion of soft landscaping and low-level planting.

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3. Restoration/Enhancement: Use of native species in garden planting to provide pollinator value.

4. Offset/Compensation: Purchase of equivalent scrub biodiversity units offsite.

Further onsite habitat creation was ruled out due to space constraints as well as the 30 year management for new habitats created.

Despite these measures, a residual deficit remains, necessitating offsite compensation.

8. Offsite Compensation Strategy

To achieve the statutory 10% BNG target, Loddon Property Limited will purchase **0.07** scrub habitat units through an approved habitat bank or statutory credit provider.

Consultations with multiple organisations and Habitat Banks confirmed availability of suitable units within the local region, including:

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

Civity – BNG Specialist

Environment Bank

Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE)

This approach ensures the biodiversity loss is offset through strategic habitat creation and long-term management within the wider ecological network.

Habitat bank location will be confirmed in the Biodiversity net gain plan.

Multiple quotes are under reviews with Environment Bank and Civity being most likely to be used due to the type of sites being suggested.

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9. Monitoring and Reporting

Delivery Mechanism: Offsite biodiversity credits will be secured via formal agreement (e.g. purchase contract or Section 106).

Monitoring: Offsite habitat creation will be managed for a minimum of 30 years, in line with statutory requirements. The monitoring will be managed by the credit provider.

Reporting: Confirmation of credit purchase will be submitted within the Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to commencement of development.

10. Conclusions

The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment for the land adjacent to 40 Heros Walk concludes that:

The proposed residential development at 40 Heros Walk, Reading will result in -74.44% change in biodiversity. This change is expected due to the nature of the small, urban site. Due to the removal of the area of scrub there is a loss of- 0.05 scrub habitat units onsite.

Compensation is provided through purchasing **0.07 units** (or equivalent, depending on the site and distance from the development) from an approved Habitat bank.

Due to the small urban nature of the site as well as its use as a private dwelling, onsite compensation is not feasible.

Further to purchasing and compensating through a Habitat unit provider, the landscaping plans also add areas of soft landscaping such as: shrubs, new tree planting & lawn. These cannot be used in the metric tool but should be noted to provide new biodiversity opportunities in the area.

The client is proposing the use of the amenity land adjacent to 40 Heros Walk that is owned by Reading Borough Council to plant 3 new native species of broadleaved trees as well as enhancing the verge with new shrubs.

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The proposed development will deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in compliance with the Environment Act 2021 and DEFRA Metric 4.0 guidance.

11. References

DEFRA (2023). Biodiversity Metric 4.0: User Guide and Technical Supplement.

Environment Act 2021.

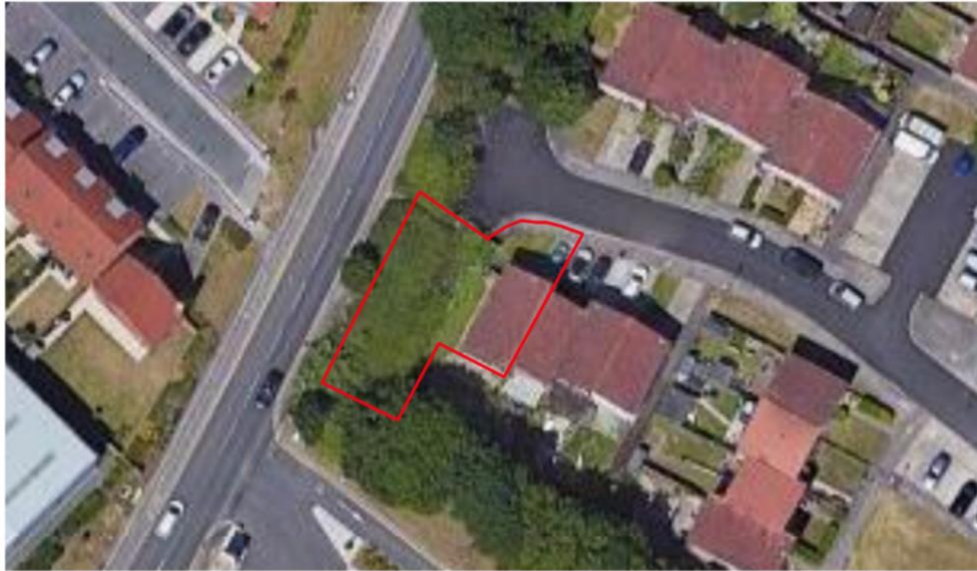
National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Natural England (2024). Statutory Biodiversity Credits Guidance.

Reading Borough Council (2023). Local Plan Policy EN11 – Biodiversity and the Green Network.

Appendices

Appendix A: Site Location and Baseline Habitat Map



0 10 20 m



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Appendix B: Post Development and Landscape Plans



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Appendix C: Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Sheets

Medium Distinctiveness Summary	
Medium Distinctiveness Units available to offset lower distinctiveness deficit	0.00
Medium Distinctiveness broad habitat losses to be offset by trading up	-0.05 ⚠
Medium Distinctiveness Unit deficit (required to meet trading rules)	-0.05 ▲

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-0.04		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-74.44%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?		No - Check Trading Summaries ▲		
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.06	0.07	0.05
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

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