

# Land at Chelmsford Road, Hartford End, CM3 1JY

## BNG Calculation Summary

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Plumb Associates Ltd  
Tel: 01621 744710

Email: [REDACTED]

Web: [REDACTED]

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Plumb Associates Ltd was instructed by Stockplace Investments Ltd to prepare a biodiversity net gain calculation for land off Chelmsford Road, Hartford End to form part of an outline application to construct up to 50 dwellings.
- 1.2 This report summarises the methodology used and the results of the calculation. The completed Metric is attached.

### Methodology

- 1.3 The biodiversity net gain calculation has been carried out using the Defra biodiversity metric 4.0, which is the most up to date version. The metric provides a standardised way of measuring and accounting for biodiversity losses and gains resulting from development or land management change. The metric considers both area habitats (e.g. grassland and woodland) and linear habitats (e.g. hedgerows and rivers) as separate elements of the overall calculation. Material enhancements for species, such as bird and bat boxes and reptile hibernacula do not form part of the calculation.
- 1.4 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Plumb Associates Ltd (Plumb Associates 2023) and the results were used to complete the baseline assessment.
- 1.5 The BNG Metric was completed by Steve Plumb MCIEEM CEnv CMLI, an ecologist with over 30 years professional experience who also undertook the PEA. The measurements were taken from the landscape CAD drawings to ensure accuracy.
- 1.6 The habitat and linear features currently present within the site, and any necessary offsite habitat are assessed to calculate the baseline biodiversity units. The proposed scheme is assessed to determine the extent of the habitat and linear features that would be lost, retained or enhanced and the quantity and quality of the proposed habitat to be created onsite, and if appropriate, offsite.
- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 states that ‘opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially whether can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. The mandatory requirement to achieve a minimum of 10% net gain under the Environment Act 2021 has been delayed until January 2024; however the applicant is committed to exceeding this target.

## 2 Current habitat

- 2.1 The site is a single field of approximately 2.42 hectares which is currently in arable production. Its value using the metric has been calculated as 4.85 habitat units.
- 2.2 There is a total of 63m of poor-quality species-rich hedgerow and 71m of native hedgerow bounding the site currently. Their value using the metric has been calculated as 0.39 hedgerow units.

## 3 Onsite habitat creation and enhancement

- 3.1 Onsite habitat will comprise 0.3135 hectares of neutral grassland within the open space areas. This grassland has been assessed as reaching Moderate condition due to its size and recreational use. In addition there will be mixed scrub, tree planting and vegetated gardens. These would give a total of 4.68 habitat units which would result in a biodiversity net loss of habitat of -3.6%.
- 3.2 There are opportunities to create new perimeter hedgerows and enhance existing sections. This would equate to 4.27 hedgerow units giving a net change of 983% due to the short lengths of hedges present currently.

## 4 Offsite habitat creation

- 4.1 The applicant owns land immediately to the west of the site and has agreed to include an area of 0.41 hectares for biodiversity enhancement to ensure that the scheme exceeds the 10% mandatory target.



- 4.2 This area is currently modified grassland which is managed as close-mown lawn. This poor-quality grassland provides 0.84 habitat units. It is considered appropriate to create 'Other neutral grassland' of Moderate condition on this site to complement the new grassland within the development site. This would deliver a total of 2.74 habitat units.
- 4.3 The inclusion of this additional area for habitat creation will result in an overall biodiversity net gain of 36.1%.

## **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The BNG Metric calculation has shown that the scheme will achieve a 36.1% net gain for habitat units and a 983% net gain for hedgerow units. The scheme therefore meets the biodiversity objects of the NPPF and Environment Act 2021.

