

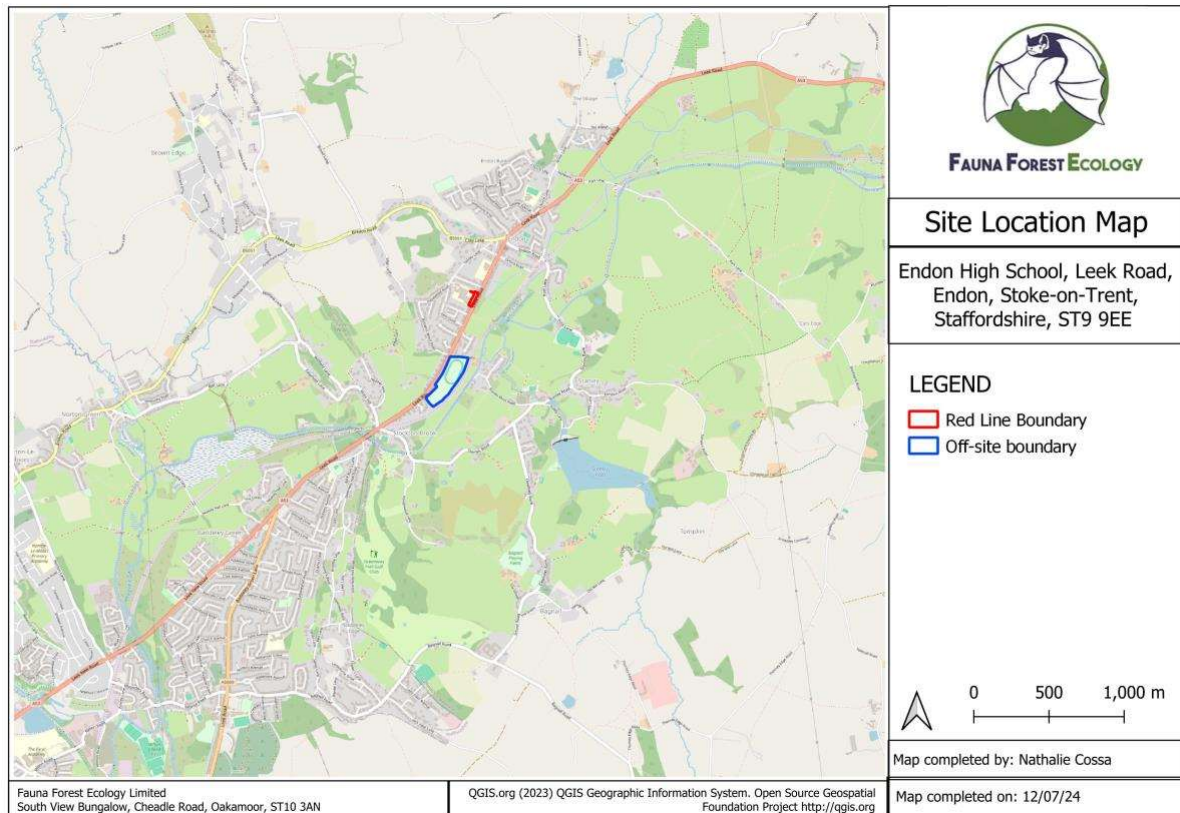


Figure 1 - Location of both sites

The BNG assessment has been informed by a UKHabs assessment. The assessment for BNG aims to:

- Calculate baseline ecological BNG unit score: this is undertaken by classifying the habitat types, their distinctiveness, condition, connectivity and strategic significance both before and post- development.
- Ensure that baseline habitat conditions are classified in a robust and consistent manner, and that classification is based on the best data available data at the time of assessment.
- Clearly identify data collection methods and any limitations.
- Calculate baseline pre- and post-development habitat units and hedgerows units for the Site based on current development proposals.
- Propose a BNG design with the aim of maximising BNG through habitat creation, enhancement and succession.
- Aim to achieve BNG on-site wherever possible; with off-site measures being considered as an alternative option if required.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2023) sets out requirements for the delivery of BNG, and this is supported within Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The above framework and guidance addresses principles across a broad spectrum of topics targeting biodiversity conservation, from individual site and species protection through to the supporting of ecosystem services, and the use of local ecological networks to support the national Nature Recovery Network. In particular the PPG promotes the delivery of measurable BNG through the creation and

enhancement of habitats alongside development.

The Government has made BNG a commitment with a mandatory minimum 10% gain for post development over baseline. This was included within the Environment Bill that has been given Royal Assent in January 2024.

Public authorities have a specific duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) to consider biodiversity and are required by central government to deliver no net loss.

BNG has been defined as 'development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, and an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support their priorities for nature conservation' (*BNG: Good Practice Principles for Development* Baker, J., 2016).

2 METHODS

The field assessment was carried out by Frances Horsford MSc and David Nixon MSc MCIEEM MRSB on 19th June 2024. The condition assessments were then inputted into the Natural England Statutory Biodiversity Metric (JP039; November 2023).

Condition Assessment

The condition assessment of each habitat was assessed following information provided in the excel spreadsheet 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments (Natural England 2023)' which accompanies the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The condition assessment has been included for each habitat type in this report.

Ecological Connectivity

In the new metric ecological connectivity is now calculated automatically.

Constraints/Limitations

UK Habs assessments are not intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of use of a site by protected or notable species and follow-up surveys targeted at specific species and groups of species may be necessary to fully assess a site and evaluate impacts.

3 BASELINE ON-SITE CONDITIONS

Calculations of existing and post-development unit values (habitat units and hedgerow units) were undertaken to assess change in biodiversity units and the percentage of gain or loss.



Figure 2 - BNG On-site Baseline Habitat Map

Site overview

The site is 0.25ha in size, spanning the length of the front eastern extent of the school between the footpath along Leek Road, extending back towards the school itself. The boundary is marked along the eastern margin by a well-managed cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* that is approximately 90m in length, as well as ornamental privet hedges *Ligustrum ovalifolium* along the south and north margins. Immediately behind the cherry laurel is a relatively narrow short-mown lawned strip that extends along the entire eastern boundary. Within the site is a timber-clad outbuilding with a gradual pitched roof.

Habitats

On-site habitats and habitat condition assessments

Grassland: Modified grassland (0.0832ha)

The grassland strip is dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* with an abundance of Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* throughout the sward. Annual meadow grass *Poa annua*, rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* were all occasionally encountered. Hairy sedge *Carex hirta* was also present, albeit rare, as well as field woodrush *Luzula campestris* which was frequent throughout. Herbaceous species included creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, daisy *Bellis perennis* and white clover *Trifolium*

repens which were frequent, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, greater plantain *Plantago major* and fox and cubs *Pilosella aurantiaca* which were occasional, then marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, lesser trefoil *Trifolium dubium*, prickly sow thistle *Sonchus asper*, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, scentless mayweed *Tripleurospermum inodorum*, ivy-leaved speedwell *Veronica hederifolia*, American willowherb *Epilobium ciliatum*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, groundsel *Senecio vulgaris* and cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis* which were rare.

DEFRA Condition Assessment: Good.
Total Habitat Units: 0.50 Habitat Units.

Assigned score: 3

Condition Assessment Criteria		
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	YES
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	NO
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present).	YES
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	YES
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	YES
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	YES
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	YES
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		YES
Number of criteria passed		6
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Good (3) ✓
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Moderate (2)
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)		Poor (1)