

HARVEY HUGHES

INDEPENDENT RURAL CONSULTANTS

JOHN BAILEY AND SONS

Greenway Bank Farm

Greenway Bank

Brindley Ford

Stoke-on-Trent

ST8 7QX

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) feasibility

Version 1 Prepared: October 2024

Prepared by: Alexandra Lewis BSc (Hons) MSc PhD

GCN Class license: 2021-52257-CLS-CLS

Harvey Hughes Ltd
43 Castle Street
Northwich
Cheshire
CW8 1EY
Tel: 0161 927 7562

Contents

1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Site Visit.....	4
3.0 Discussion and BNG	9

1.0 Introduction

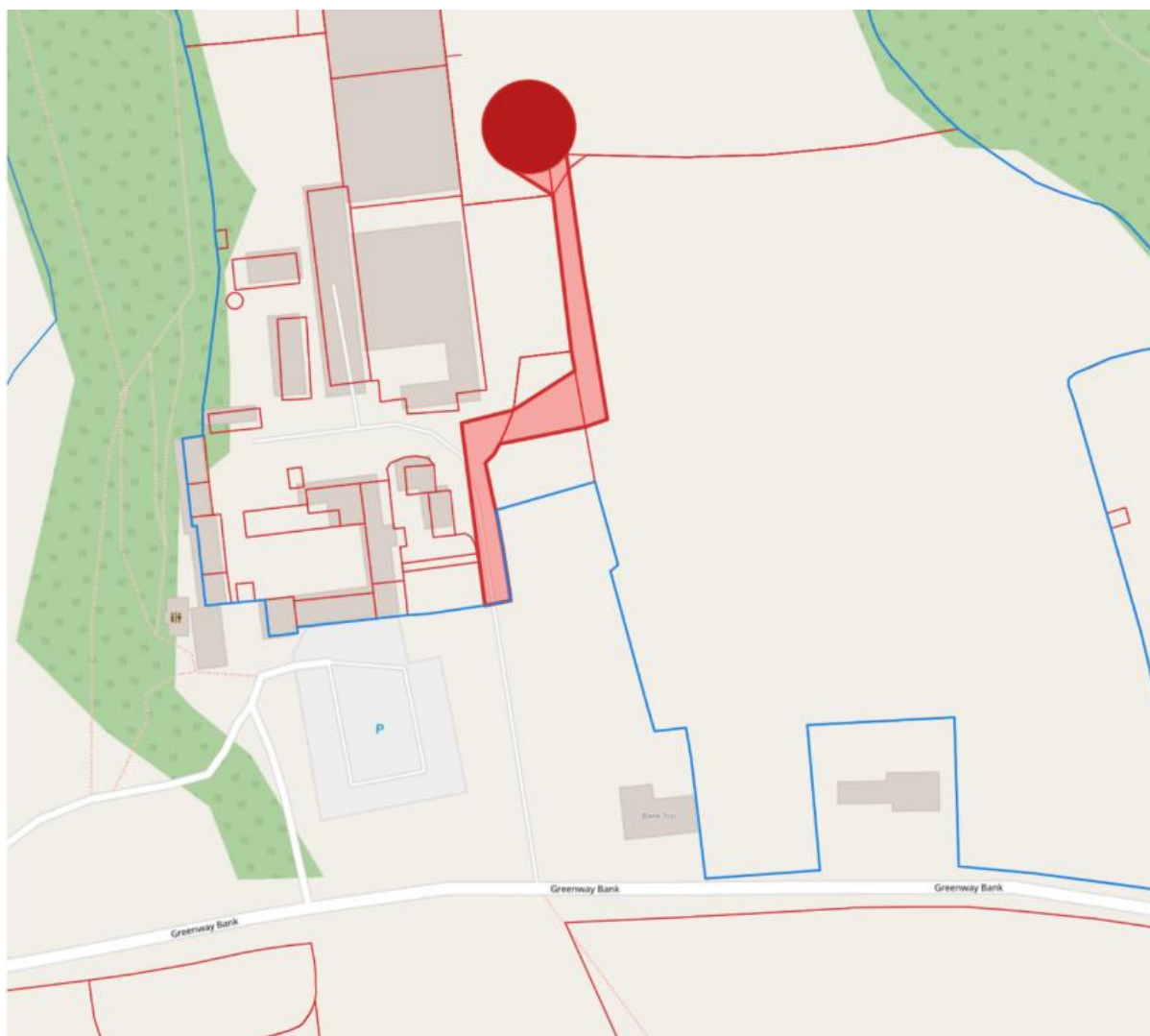
This BNG feasibility report was commissioned by Mr Bailey of Greenway Bank Farm, Brindley Ford to provide supporting information for a planning application of a precast circular concrete slurry store.

The development site is located at Greenway Bank Farm (see figures 1 and 2 for aerial image and site location plan). The proposed development site has a total area of 1060m². The proposed slurry tower has a footprint of 379.52m² and is to be located behind the existing slurry lagoon, adjacent to the cubicle shed in the corner of a modified grass field. The remainder of the site is for access during the construction period and will only be temporarily affected, with the site returning to its original state rapidly.

The wider landscape consists of agriculture (predominately pastoral fields and scattered farms) dissected by hedgerows and roads along with areas of woodland.



Figure 1 – Aerial image of proposed development site



Produced on Sep 30, 2024
© Crown copyright and database right 2024 (licence number 100059532)

Location Map - Red and Blue Line

50 m
Scale 1:1358 (at A4)

Figure 2. Site location

2.0 Site visit

A walkover of the site (and area immediately surrounding) was performed on 9th October 2024 by Alex Lewis who has over 11 years' experience in ecological survey. Habitat types were identified, and potential detrimental losses are discussed below. There were no limitations to the site visit and the entire proposed development site was walked and photographed.



Photograph 1 – Proposed location of slurry tower



Photograph 2 – Proposed location of slurry tower adjacent existing cubicle shed



Photograph 3 – location of temporary access route to slurry tower to the north of lagoon.



Photograph 4 and 5 – existing access route to the east of the slurry lagoon – compacted and previously set with hardcore, now overgrown with grass – TEMPORARY LOSS ONLY.



Photograph 6 – Existing compacted hardcore track south of the slurry lagoon - ACCESS.

The area to the north of the slurry lagoon is well trampled daily by a large number of cows entering and exiting the cubicle shed to the wider pasture. As such this area is heavily poached all year around (photographs 1-3). Although we have had exceptionally wet weather in recent months and the land appears more poached than usual – this area is likely to remain devoid of any vegetation and offers very little in the way of ecological value. This area is where the proposed slurry tower is to be located (dark red circle on figure 2 / 379.52m²). The structure will be installed onto a cast in-situ concrete base and fit with a watertight seal using an internal and external ring-beam cast at the wall/base interface.

The remaining portion of the proposed development (light red area on figure 2 / 680m²) will only see temporary disturbance for access during construction phase. Of this 680m² – 176m² is sealed road surface as part of the farm drive at the southern end of the development, 230m² is compacted, hardcore track (photograph 6) and 274m² is grassy, over-grown track which has previously received hardcore (photograph 4 and 5). The grassy track area may provide some limited opportunities for foraging animals, but the wider pasture is of much higher ecological value and provides more attractive opportunities for wildlife.

There were no protected species on site and there was no evidence of protected species using the site. Furthermore, using the interactive map tool on MAGIC MAP- the nearest SSSI was identified almost 4km away (Ford Green Reedbed – see figure 3). Nonetheless the Impact risk zone for SSSIs was investigated to see if there were any air pollution/other considerations. For slurry lagoons less than 750m² the advice was there was no need to consult Natural England on the proposed development at this location. This is because the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on the nearest SSSIs.

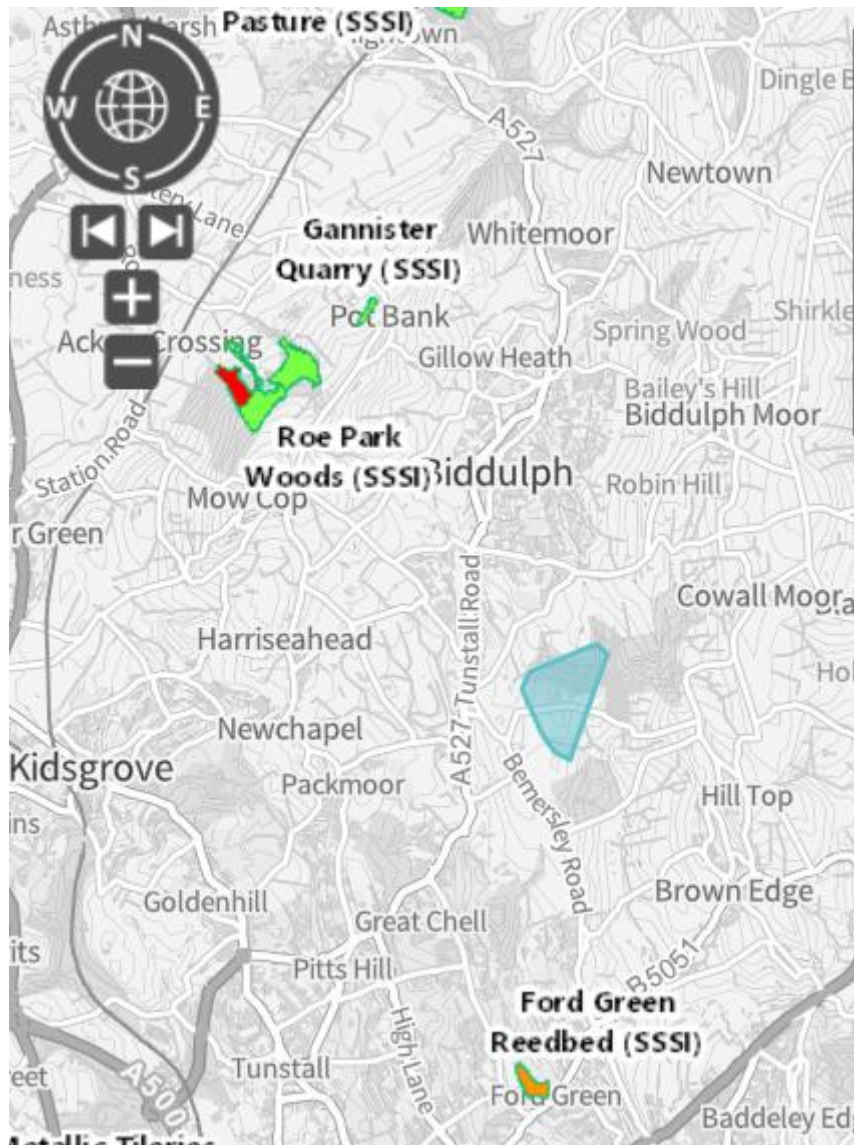


Figure 3 – SSSI locations in relation to the proposed development site (pale blue)

3.0 Discussion and BNG

The habitats present on site are not well represented within the BNG metric. The only overall habitat loss is the 379.52m² to the slurry tower, with the remaining pre-existing habitats being retained. Although this 379.52m² of bare ground is within a wider modified grassland field – it would score a small loss of 0.13 habitat units regardless of if we labelled it modified grassland or bare soil. Upon site inspection (photographs 1-3) this area is so heavily trampled and devoid of any value that the actual loss of habitat units would be 0 and therefore **exempt from the BNG calculation** – as there cannot be a 10% gain on 0.

In summary, the proposed slurry tower will have no overall detrimental effect on pre-existing biodiversity and any disturbance during the construction phase will only be temporary, returning to its pre-development state within a year or so of construction (predominantly the grassy track). This small-scale project is being done with the support of the RPA Slurry Infrastructure Grant to meet the storage requirements of the farm. The longer-term benefits of this project will improve the overall management of farm slurry, improve use-efficiency of organic nutrients on the farm and reduce potential pollution (improve air, water quality, and reduce greenhouse gases).