

**AEWC** Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

## **Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment**

### **Welling United Football Club**

**Park View Road  
Welling  
Bexley  
DA16 1SY**

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23-011  
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## Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by HCUK Group on behalf of their client to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment at Welling United Football Club, Park View Road, Welling, DA16 1SY at grid reference TQ 47137 75611 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- The estimated existing and post-development biodiversity value of the habitats on the site is calculated using the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool – November 2023 Update.
- The proposed development plan involves demolition of most of the existing buildings and removal of the pitch to facilitate a new synthetic pitch and new residential blocks, club and hospitality buildings.
- Ecological enhancements built into the development design include extensive biodiverse green roof areas across several areas of the proposed new buildings, a small area of meadow planting, areas of green wall on the new buildings and along the southern boundary, ornamental tree planting along the frontage just outside the northern boundary and mixed native and ornamental planting within the rooftop terraces. In terms of the BNG metric, these are not sufficient to offset the loss of the existing habitats on the site.
- **The headline results indicate that there is an estimated negative BNG (i.e. loss) of 33.12% for habitats.**
- In addition, the trading rules cannot be satisfied under the current proposals, as deciduous woodland is being lost from the site and not replaced. **Deciduous woodland is a habitat of principal importance and therefore should be retained in line with Paragraph 179(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised 2023).**

This report has been prepared by AEWCLtd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 AEWCLtd were commissioned by HCUK Group on behalf of their client to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment at Welling United Football Club, Park View Road, Welling, DA16 1SY to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to give an estimate of the BNG units that may be achieved under the current development proposals, where a BNG of +10% is not achieved suggestions for additional ecological enhancement are provided.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The proposed development site is located at Welling United Football Club, Park View Road, Welling, DA16 1SY at central grid reference TQ 47137 75611. See Figure 1.



**FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE SITE LOCATION**

- 2.2 The site is located in the town of Welling in Southeast London, along the A207 Park View Road. The surrounding landscape comprises residential properties with small amenity gardens and some light industry to the west and north, further sports facilities to the east and Danson Park immediately to the south which provides areas of woodland, parkland and open water.
- 2.3 The proposed development site is approximately 1.2ha and largely comprises buildings, hardstanding, modified grassland within the pitch and narrow bands along



the southern edges of the site containing low ruderal vegetation and a small woodland patch. See Figure 2 and Photographs 1 to 4.



**FIGURE 2: AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE BOUNDARY**



**Photograph 1:** Looking south across the pitch



**Photograph 2:** Ruderal vegetation along inside of southern boundary





**Photograph 3:** *Small woodland clump on western boundary*



**Photograph 4:** *Buildings and hardstanding in the north-west of the site*

2.4 Previous ecology surveys have been conducted by AEWCLtd, these are as follows:

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey – May 2023
- Bat Survey – June 2023

2.5 The proposed development plan involves extensive refurbishment to the existing site, which will include: replacement of the existing pitch with a 3G synthetic pitch on a slightly altered footprint, retention and refurbishment of the stand and adjacent hall on the eastern side of the pitch, demolition of the remaining buildings and structures to facilitate construction of new club and hospitality facilities along the western side of the site, and a new multi-storey residential development wrapping around the northern end of the site, providing 104 residential units with commercial units at ground floor level. See Figure 3.

## 7.4 Landscape strategy

## Key areas

## KEY

- 1 EXTENSIVE GREEN ROOF
- 2 EXTENSIVE GREEN ROOF & PV PANELS
- 3 ROOF TERRACE
- 4 3G FOOTBALL PITCH
- 5 GREEN WALL
- 6 NEW TREES



Welling United FC

114

CREATE

**FIGURE 3: PROPOSED LAYOUT**

### 3. Method and Constraints

- 3.1 The estimated existing and post-development biodiversity value of the habitats on the site is calculated using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool – March 2023 Update.
- 3.2 The following assumptions have been made and therefore associated constraints should be considered when looking at BNG unit values obtained:
- The potential for protected and notable species is not covered within the scope of this report;
  - Existing habitats on-site are taken from those identified within the survey undertaken in May 2023;
  - Post-development habitats have been inferred from those given with the Landscape Strategy Key Areas plan within the Design and Access Statement (see Figure 3);
  - All areas and lengths are approximate;
  - Areas in hectares and length in km are both given to two decimal places, therefore rounding errors and occasional adjustments to values, to ensure consistency of total areas in existing and post-development habitat size, are unavoidable;
  - Habitat quality has been estimated in some instances (i.e. for post-development habitats);

- The area of planted trees along the northern frontage of the site was estimated using medium trees in the tree calculator included within the metric.

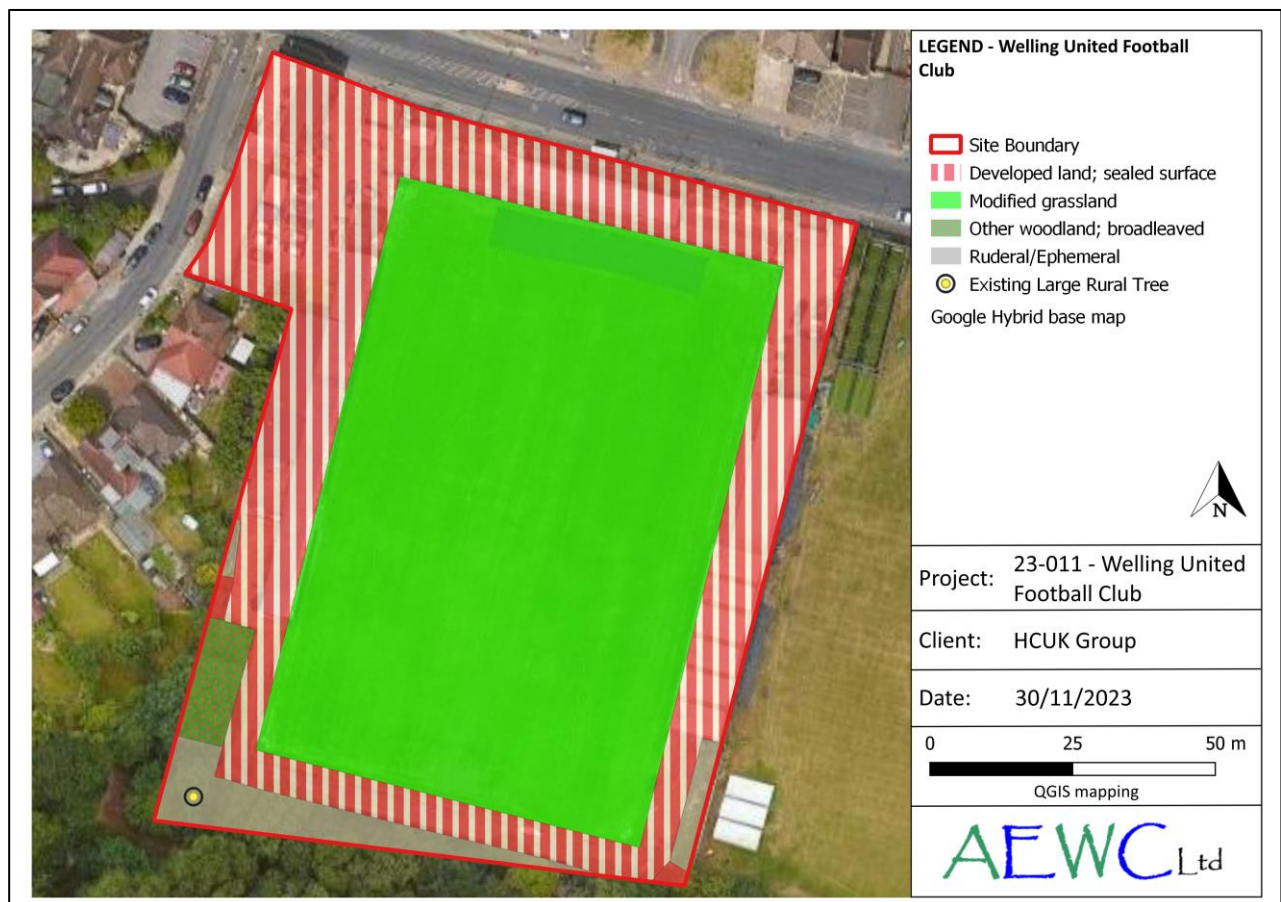
3.3 Given the above constraints the values for BNG obtained should be considered to be an **estimate** only.

3.4 Calculations may need to be adjusted in future should the BNG metrics or requirements be revised.

## 4. Habitat data

4.1 The values for existing and post-development habitats and their area and length used for this assessment are illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 respectively.

4.2 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) does include the band of ruderal vegetation along the southern and south-western boundary as deciduous woodland habitat continuous with further woodland within Danson Park, however this is likely to have been mapped based on canopy cover in satellite imagery. Ground survey showed this band to contain ruderal/ephemeral vegetation that is overhung by the canopy of adjacent woodland outside of the red line boundary.



**FIGURE 4: EXISTING ON-SITE HABITATS**



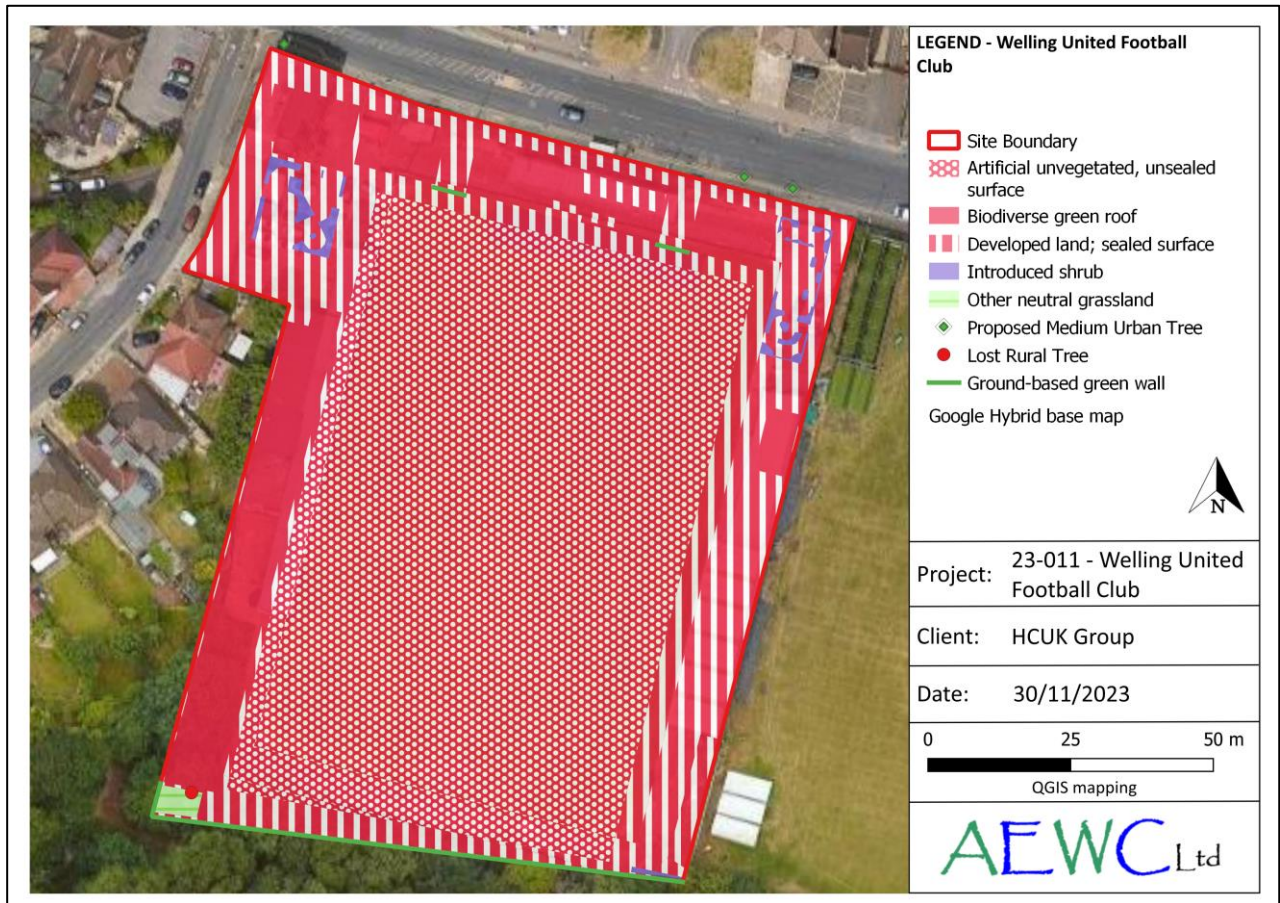


FIGURE 5: POST-DEVELOPMENT ON SITE HABITATS

## 5. Results

5.1 The headline results using the above habitats and calculations are given below (refer to the metric for full details).

Table 1: Headline estimated BNG values

FINAL RESULTS		
<b>Total net unit change</b> (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-0.64
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
<b>Total net % change</b> (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-33.12%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
<b>Trading rules satisfied?</b>	<b>No - Check Trading Summaries ▲</b>	

## 6. Conclusions & Recommendations

- 6.1 The development includes the loss of the existing modified grassland and ruderal vegetation in addition to the small area of woodland and individual sycamore tree present on the site.
- 6.2 Ecological enhancements built into the development design include extensive biodiverse green roof areas across several areas of the proposed new buildings, a small area of meadow planting, areas of green wall on the new buildings and along the southern boundary, ornamental tree planting along the frontage just outside the northern boundary and mixed native and ornamental planting within the rooftop terraces. In terms of the BNG metric, these are not sufficient to offset the loss of the existing habitats on the site.
- 6.3 The headline results indicate that there is an estimated negative BNG (i.e. loss) of 33.12% for habitats. In addition, the trading rules cannot be satisfied under the current proposals, as deciduous woodland is being lost from the site and not replaced. **Deciduous woodland is a habitat of principal importance and therefore should be retained in line with Paragraph 179(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised 2023).**
- 6.4 The BNG value achievable on the site can be increased by reducing the built footprint and / or increasing the area or quality of the habitats post-development. Some examples include:
- Including further areas of biodiverse green roofs
  - Including further areas of green walls or vertical planting
  - Replacing areas of hard standing with additional planting, e.g. inclusion of grassland along the southern edge of the site
  - Replacing ornamental planting with native, wildlife friendly planting.
  - Use of a grass playing pitch instead of an artificial surface – the significant loss is largely due to the loss of the large area of grassland that makes up the current pitch. Incorporating a new grass pitch in addition to the proposed green roofs would result in significant habitat gains.
  - Alteration of the proposed layout to allow retention of the woodland habitat – this would increase the BNG value and would additionally satisfy the trading rule relating to this habitat.
- 6.5 In England, BNG is becoming mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). This is expected to come into force in January 2024. Developers must deliver a biodiversity net gain of 10%. Many local planning authorities (LPAs) already encourage BNG to be sought through local planning policies and decisions.
- 6.6 The development also proposes to incorporate a number of bat, swift and starling boxes into the new buildings, as well as bug hotels and bee hives.

## References

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