

SITE INTELLIGENCE

BNG Screening & Feasibility Statement

Desktop Biodiversity Net Gain Applicability Assessment

14 Oakfield Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4EH



PREPARED FOR

Sample Client

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

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Client Confidential

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Meaning
BGP	Biodiversity Gain Plan
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BOA	Biodiversity Opportunity Area
BU	Biodiversity Unit (unit of measurement in the Statutory Metric)
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
GCN	Great Crested Newt
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone (SSSI consultation zone)
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NBN	National Biodiversity Network
NE	Natural England
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
PHI	Priority Habitat Inventory
S41	Section 41 — NERC Act 2006 (species/habitats of principal importance)
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSM	Small Sites Metric
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TBH	Thames Basin Heaths
UKHab	UK Habitat Classification

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This BNG Screening & Feasibility Statement is a desktop assessment that answers three questions:

- **1.** Does Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) apply to this development?
- **2.** What will it cost and how difficult will it be to deliver?
- **3.** What ecological surveys are needed before a planning application?

Traffic-Light Verdicts

- **GREEN:** Exempt from BNG — no further action needed
- **AMBER:** BNG applies — manageable with standard approach
- **RED:** BNG applies — significant constraints or high cost

What This Report Is NOT

- This is NOT a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) — a BGP must be prepared by a qualified ecologist and approved by the LPA before development commences
- This is NOT a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) or ecological impact assessment
- This is NOT a compliant Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation — baseline values are indicative ranges based on desktop data only
- Habitat condition has NOT been assessed in the field — condition is assumed for estimation purposes only

Desktop data provides a reliable starting point for planning purposes but cannot replace field survey. All baseline estimates, cost ranges, and survey recommendations in this report should be confirmed by a qualified ecologist before a planning application is submitted.

1. INTRODUCTION

This BNG Screening & Feasibility Statement has been prepared by Site Intelligence™ on behalf of PF & Co Construction Ltd for the proposed proposed two-storey rear extension and loft conversion with associated landscaping and off-street parking provision at 14 Oakfield Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4EH.

Since 2 April 2024, most planning applications in England must deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as a condition of planning permission, in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 (Part 6) and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (General) Regulations 2024. Guildford Borough Council's adopted Local Plan may set a higher local requirement.

This desktop screening determines whether BNG applies to the proposed development, maps ecological constraints from publicly available datasets, estimates the likely baseline biodiversity value range, assesses delivery difficulty, presents cost implications, and identifies ecological surveys required before a planning application can be submitted.

This is a desktop assessment only. It is based on publicly available datasets accessed on 1 March 2026 and does not include field survey data. Habitat condition has not been assessed in the field.

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2. BNG APPLICABILITY ASSESSMENT

This section systematically checks all five statutory exemptions to determine whether mandatory BNG applies to this development.

2.1 Systematic Exemption Check

#	Exemption	Criteria	Applies?	Reasoning
1	Householder	Works within curtilage of existing dwelling under householder application	POSSIBLY	If this is a householder application (extensions only), BNG may not apply. Check application type.
2	Self-Build	Registered on council self-build register	NO	The proposal is not a self-build or custom-build dwelling
3	De Minimis	Habitat area < 25 m ² AND hedgerow < 5 m linear, with no priority habitat impact	NO	The site includes garden areas well above the 25 m ² threshold
4	Permitted Development	Prior approval application under GPDO	NO	A full planning application is anticipated
5	Date-Based	Application submitted before 2 Apr 2024	NO	The application has not yet been submitted

2.2 Metric Determination

The Small Sites Metric (SSM) is likely to apply. The proposal involves a site of less than 0.5 hectares and is not a major commercial development. The SSM is a simplified version of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric 4.0 designed for smaller developments.

2.3 Applicability Verdict

BNG LIKELY APPLIES

No statutory exemption confirmed | Small Sites Metric | Minimum 10% Net Gain

Note: The national statutory minimum is 10% net gain. Some LPAs require higher percentages through local plan policies. Check the applicable local plan requirement.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

Policy/Legislation	Relevance
Environment Act 2021, Part 6, Schedules 14–15	Establishes mandatory BNG for planning permissions in England. Minimum 10% net gain. 30-year management and monitoring obligation
Biodiversity Gain Requirements (General) Regulations 2024	Sets out exemptions, Small Sites Metric thresholds, pre-commencement condition requirements, and Biodiversity Gain Plan approval process
NPPF December 2024, Chapter 15 (Paras 186–193)	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Para 186(d): plans should promote measurable net gains for biodiversity
Statutory Biodiversity Metric 4.0 / Small Sites Metric	DEFRA methodology for calculating biodiversity value before and after development

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4. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE — DESKTOP ASSESSMENT

This desktop screening uses publicly available ecological datasets to map constraints within and around the site. This is not a substitute for field survey.

4.1 Site Habitat Classification

The Natural England Living England Phase 4 habitat map classifies the site and its immediate surroundings as “Built-up Areas and Gardens”. The site comprises a residential property with front and rear gardens. The rear garden (estimated 150–200 m²) is the primary on-site habitat. At UKHab Level 3, this is most likely classified as “Vegetated garden” (low distinctiveness).

4.2 Priority Habitat Inventory

Priority Habitat Inventory records within 500 metres of the site:

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Source	Distance from Site
Deciduous woodland	1.27	National Forest Inventory 2023	~300–400 m
Additional habitats	0.28	PHI	Within 500 m

Deciduous woodland is a Section 41 (NERC Act 2006) priority habitat. These parcels are in the vicinity of the site but are not within the site boundary.

4.3 Ancient Woodland

No ancient woodland was identified within 500 metres of the site. Natural England standing advice for ancient woodland (15-metre buffer) does not apply.

4.4 Ecological Designations

Designation	Name	Distance	Relevance
SPA	Thames Basin Heaths	~4 km (within 5 km Zol)	SANG/SAMM may be required for net new residential
SSSI	Nearby SSSI	~2 km	Site within Impact Risk Zone
National Landscape	Surrey Hills	~1.5–2 km	Site outside designation but proximate
LNR	Local Nature Reserve	~800 m	Local biodiversity value

4.5 Species Records

NBN Atlas species records within 2 km (CC-BY licensed data only, accessed 1 March 2026):

Species/Group	Records	Status	Relevance to Development
Bats (all species)	0 (CC-BY)	European Protected Species	ZERO records is a data gap — NOT evidence of absence. Bat PRA essential for roof works
Hedgehog	3	S41 Priority Species	Hedgehog connectivity gaps in boundary fencing recommended
Slow-worm	3	S41 Priority Species	Survey needed if suitable habitat affected by extension
Swift	3	S41, BoCC Red List	Building-nesting species — eaves/roof works need nesting bird check
House Sparrow	6	BoCC Red List	Building-nesting species — check for active nests before roof works

Important: Zero bat records on NBN Atlas does not indicate bats are absent from the area. Bat records are frequently held under restricted licences and are not available through CC-BY filtered searches. A bat Preliminary Roost Assessment is essential before any works affecting roof structures.

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5. BASELINE BIODIVERSITY VALUE ESTIMATE

THIS IS NOT A COMPLIANT BIODIVERSITY METRIC 4.0 CALCULATION. The following estimates are indicative ranges based on desktop data and assumed habitat condition.

5.1 Area-Based Habitats

Habitat (UKHab)	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Assumed Condition	Estimated BU Range
Vegetated garden	0.015–0.020	Low	Moderate (assumed)	0.04–0.08
Developed land; sealed surface	0.020–0.025	Very Low	N/A (hardstanding)	0.00
Building footprint	~0.010	N/A	N/A	0.00

Estimated total baseline: 0.04–0.08 biodiversity units (area module)

5.2 Combined Baseline Estimate

Module	Low Estimate (BU)	Central Estimate (BU)	Upper Estimate (BU)
Area-based	0.04	0.06	0.08
Hedgerow	0.00	0.01	0.02
Watercourse	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	0.04	0.07	0.10

10% net gain target (national minimum):

- Low baseline (0.04 BU): target gain = 0.004 BU
- Central baseline (0.07 BU): target gain = 0.007 BU
- Upper baseline (0.10 BU): target gain = 0.010 BU

At these low absolute values, achieving net gain is likely feasible through on-site enhancements alone (native planting, ecological features), without the need for off-site units or statutory credits.

6. BNG DELIVERY DIFFICULTY ASSESSMENT

6.1 On-Site Delivery Potential

- **AMBER:** Constrained but feasible with targeted design

The rear garden (150–200 m²) provides limited but viable space for on-site habitat creation and enhancement. The extension will reduce available garden area. Post-development garden area is estimated at 125–185 m².

The absolute BNG target is very small. This is achievable through:

- Native planting scheme in retained rear garden (wildflower border, native shrubs)
- Green roof on extension (if flat or shallow-pitch roof)
- Bat and bird boxes on extension (integrated or external)
- Hedgehog connectivity gaps in boundary fencing
- SuDS features with biodiversity value (rain garden, permeable surfaces)

6.2 Off-Site Options

If on-site delivery proves insufficient after field survey, off-site options may be available through registered habitat banks or local wildlife trusts.

6.3 Statutory Credits (Last Resort)

Statutory biodiversity credits are purchased from DEFRA as a last resort. They are significantly more expensive than other options:

- Tier A1 (low distinctiveness): £42,000 per credit (£84,000 per biodiversity unit)
- Prices last updated 19 June 2025; reviewed every 6 months

6.4 Overall Delivery Verdict

DELIVERY DIFFICULTY: LOW–MODERATE

Small absolute target likely achievable on-site with designed landscape scheme

7. COST IMPLICATIONS

All costs are presented as indicative ranges. Actual costs will depend on field survey findings, ecologist fees, and the BNG delivery strategy confirmed after baseline assessment.

Cost Item	Estimated Range	When Required	Notes
Phase 1 Habitat / UKHab Survey	£800–£1,500	Before planning application	Establishes baseline habitat data for metric calculation
Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment	£300–£500	Before planning application	Essential for any works affecting roof structures
Bat Activity Surveys (if PRA triggers)	£1,500–£3,000	May–September only	Up to 3 survey visits; seasonal constraint
Small Sites Metric Calculation	£500–£1,000	Before planning application	By qualified ecologist using SSM spreadsheet
Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP)	£1,000–£2,500	Pre-commencement condition	Must be approved by LPA before development starts
On-Site Habitat Enhancement	£2,000–£8,000	During construction	Native planting, bat/bird boxes, hedgehog gaps, green roof
30-Year Management Plan	£1,500–£3,000	With BGP submission	Preparation of 30-year habitat management and monitoring plan

Estimated BNG Cost Summary:

Scenario	Survey Costs	BNG Delivery	Professional Fees	Total Range
Best case: on-site only, no protected species	£1,300–£2,500	£2,000–£8,000	£1,500–£3,500	£4,800–£14,000
Moderate: on-site + bat surveys triggered	£2,800–£5,500	£2,000–£8,000	£1,500–£3,500	£6,300–£17,000
Worst case: off-site units needed	£3,800–£7,400	£15,000–£50,000	£2,500–£5,500	£21,300–£62,900

The best-case scenario (on-site delivery, no protected species complications) is the most likely outcome for a small urban site.

8. ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Required Surveys

Survey	Priority	Triggered By	Survey Window	Duration
Phase 1 Habitat / UKHab Survey	ESSENTIAL	BNG applies — baseline data needed for metric	Year-round (optimal Apr–Oct)	1 day + reporting
Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment	ESSENTIAL	Works affecting roof structure	Year-round	1 day + reporting
Bat Activity Surveys	IF PRA TRIGGERS	If PRA identifies moderate–high roost potential	May–September only	2–3 dusk/dawn surveys
Nesting Bird Check	IF WORKS MAR–AUG	Building-nesting species recorded; roof works proposed	March–August	Pre-works check

8.2 Survey Timing Windows

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Habitat	—	—	—	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—	—
Bat PRA	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bat Activity	—	—	—	—	●	●	●	●	●	—	—	—
Bird Check	—	—	●	●	●	●	●	●	—	—	—	—

● = Survey can be undertaken | — = Outside survey window

8.3 Programme Impact

The bat survey window (May–September) represents the most significant programme constraint. If a bat PRA identifies moderate or high roost potential, activity surveys cannot begin until May.

Recommendation: Commission the Phase 1 habitat survey and bat PRA as early as possible to identify whether activity surveys are triggered.

9. PRELIMINARY ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The following opportunities should be explored through the design process.

9.1 On-Site Opportunities

Enhancement	Feasibility	BNG Contribution	Estimated Cost
Native planting scheme in retained rear garden	HIGH	Uplift from “vegetated garden” to higher-distinctiveness habitat	£500–£2,000
Green roof on extension	MODERATE	New habitat creation on previously non-habitat surface	£1,500–£4,000
Integrated bat boxes	HIGH	Enhancement feature (positive for species)	£50–£150 per box
Integrated swift bricks	HIGH	Enhancement for S41 priority species	£25–£50 per brick
Hedgehog connectivity gaps (13 cm x 13 cm)	HIGH	Enhancement for S41 priority hedgehog	£5–£20 per gap
Rain garden / SuDS planting	MODERATE	Dual benefit: drainage + biodiversity	£500–£1,500

9.2 Mitigation Hierarchy

The mitigation hierarchy must be applied in order:

- **1. Avoid** — Retain existing garden habitat where possible; minimise footprint of extension
- **2. Minimise** — Protect mature trees and planting during construction; timing of works outside nesting season
- **3. Restore** — Reinststate soft landscape after construction; improve habitat quality through native planting
- **4. Offset** — Off-site BNG units only if on-site delivery is insufficient after applying steps 1–3

10. CONCLUSION

BNG APPLIES — MODERATE DIFFICULTY

Small Sites Metric | On-site delivery likely feasible

Key Findings:

- **Applicability:** BNG likely applies to this development. The Small Sites Metric applies.
- **Baseline:** The estimated baseline biodiversity value is very low (0.04–0.10 BU), reflecting the urban garden habitat.
- **Delivery:** On-site delivery is likely feasible through native planting, ecological features (bat/bird boxes, hedgehog gaps), and potentially a green roof.
- **Cost:** The estimated BNG cost for the most likely scenario is £4,800–£14,000.
- **Surveys:** A Phase 1 habitat survey and bat Preliminary Roost Assessment are essential before a planning application.

Critical Next Steps:

1. Commission Phase 1 habitat survey and bat PRA immediately
2. If bat PRA triggers activity surveys, programme for May–September
3. Instruct ecologist to complete Small Sites Metric calculation using field data
4. Incorporate biodiversity enhancements into architectural design
5. Prepare Biodiversity Gain Plan for pre-commencement condition discharge

This desktop screening is NOT a compliant Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP), Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), or Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation. All ecological surveys, metric calculations, and Biodiversity Gain Plans must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.



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SF.2 — Permitted Development Determination. Where this report considers whether proposed works may fall within permitted development rights, this assessment is indicative only. A definitive determination of permitted development rights can only be obtained from the Local Planning Authority by way of a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) application. PF & Co Construction Ltd does not provide LDC applications and accepts no liability for reliance on any indicative PD assessment contained in this report.

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SF.4 — Specialist Recommendations. Where this report recommends further investigation or specialist assessment (including but not limited to Phase 1 Contamination Assessment, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Specialist Heritage Impact Assessment, UXO Desk Study, or full Geotechnical Desk Study), such recommendations indicate that the publicly available data has identified a potential risk that requires specialist investigation. The absence of such a recommendation does not confirm the absence of risk.

SF.5 — Flood Zone and Surface Water Distinction. Where this report assesses flood risk, Environment Agency Flood Zone classifications (Zones 1, 2, 3a, 3b) relate to river (fluvial) and coastal flooding only. Surface water (pluvial) flooding is a separate and distinct risk that is not captured by Flood Zone mapping. This report assesses surface water flood risk separately using EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water data, but publicly available data may not capture all local drainage or surface water conditions. Where flood risk of any type is identified or suspected, a formal Flood Risk Assessment should be commissioned.

SF.6 — Data Source Coverage. This report compiles data from multiple public sources including planning.data.gov.uk, BGS Geology Viewer, Environment Agency flood mapping, Historic England NHLE, Natural England designations, and local authority records. These sources do not provide universal national coverage, may not be updated in real time, and may contain errors. Data confidence is rated per category within the report.

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