

TECHNICAL NOTE

Project name **Reading Station Park**
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Client **Aviva Investors**
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To **Aviva Investors**
From **Ramboll**

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1 Introduction

Ramboll UK Limited (Ramboll) was commissioned to undertake a high-level Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of Reading Station Park, in advance of its redevelopment.

The aim of this report is to provide the results of the BNG assessment in relation to the Site including the associated construction works and landscape plans for the proposed development. This has been achieved through calculating the biodiversity change as a result of the proposed development in terms of net loss, no net loss or a net gain.

This report is not a full BNG assessment and is only intended to provide an indication of the likely BNG that the development could achieve.

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey of the development area was undertaken by Sharon Yardy BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM of Ramboll in April 2019. Habitats have been converted to UKHab for the purpose of the assessment. The biodiversity unit (BU) score per area-based habitat was calculated via the metric using the quality factors (distinctiveness, condition, and strategic significance) and their assigned values. The sum of all the BUs provided the area-based habitat biodiversity baseline. Any singular/street trees found on-site which did not form part of a Phase 1 habitat type were noted and entered into the 'Urban Tree Helper' section of the metric. This tree helper tool provides an area in hectares, which is input to the metric as the habitat 'Urban Trees'.

Post-development outline landscape plans have been produced by Collado Collins Architects (Reading Station Park – 2021_DAS 08 – Illustrative landscape scheme.pdf), these landscape plans, and the Reading Station Park Design Code (September 2021) have been reviewed to determine the post development habitat types and areas.

The target condition of the post-development habitats has been assigned based upon the expert judgement of the ecologist and the future management aspirations of the site. As in the baseline calculations, any trees which do not

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form part of a distinct habitat have been entered into the 'Urban Tree Helper' section of the metric to calculate a total area (ha). This area was input as an 'Urban Trees' habitat.

Natural England Biodiversity Metric v3.0 has been used in this assessment to calculate the net change in biodiversity for the development.

2 Limitations

The areas of the post-development habitats were calculated from PDF maps rather than detailed landscape proposals. Additionally, due to the low resolution and outline presentation of the post-development landscape plan, it was difficult to determine precisely what the post-development habitats will be, or to differentiate between certain habitat types. However, a review of the Reading Station Park Design Code identified namely modified grassland and ground-level planters. Both habitat types hold the same distinctiveness value in the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.0 of low, and the total biodiversity units will therefore not be affected. Therefore, a good assumption has been made in relation to the post-development habitat types involved, as well as the baseline biodiversity position, and a Ramboll is satisfied a robust assessment has been undertaken, given the minor limitations.

It is assumed that for the purposes of this assessment, and to present a 'worst case' scenario, all habitats will be removed at the baseline stage.

3 Results Summary

The current calculated change is +207.65% (+0.50 Biodiversity Units), which equates to a net gain for area-based habitats. The landscaping is also likely to be capable of greater uplift through refinement of the landscape plans at the Reserved Matters stage, which should be produced in consultation with a biodiversity specialist.