



BNG Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan

Land West of Gatesmead,
Haywards Heath

Ecosupport Ltd
K4 Keppel,
Daedalus Park,
Lee-on-the-Solent
PO13 9FX

info@ecosupport.co.uk

VAT: 228 4314 18



Report	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Management and Monitoring Plan
Site Name	Land West of Gatesmead, Haywards Heath
Author(s)	Benedict Wightman BSc (Hons)
Checked by	Gareth Ainscough MSc ACIEEM
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ecosupport Ltd. were commissioned by Crest Nicholson Operations Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of a parcel of 'Land West of Gatesmead, Haywards Heath' and detail the results of this assessment within a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to satisfy the statutory requirements for developers to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% to ensure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurable better state than they were before the development.

The purpose of this BNG assessment is to quantify the biodiversity value of the site prior to its development and the predicted value post development. This is measured in biodiversity units, calculated according to the habitats present based on their size, distinctiveness and condition. This enables the quantitative calculation of the predicted change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development, with the objective of achieving a net gain in biodiversity.

The methodology for the on-site condition assessment undertaken on 23rd April 2025, with an updated survey undertaken on 21st July 2025, was conducted in line with Natural England Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Condition assessment protocols, and the assessment uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (v1.0.4) to calculate biodiversity losses and gains.

Following the incorporation of the site proposals into the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric, ***on site there is a net loss of -38.46% in area habitats (or -13.25 habitat units) and a net gain of +40.61% in hedgerow units (+0.58 hedgerow units), and the trading rules are not satisfied. A further 3.44 area habitat units are required to achieve a 10% net gain.*** Therefore, the requirement of a 10% net gain for biodiversity has not been achieved on site and as such further measures are required through off-site habitat enhancement. A more than sufficient gain has been achieved for hedgerow habitats within the proposed development scheme.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ecosupport Ltd. were commissioned by Crest Nicholson Operations Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of 'Land West of Gatesmead, Haywards Heath' RH16 1AN (hereafter referred to as 'the site') and detail the results of this assessment within a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

The purpose of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment is to quantify the biodiversity value of the site prior to its development, and the predicted value post development. This is measured in biodiversity units, calculated according to the habitats present based on their size, distinctiveness and condition. This enables the quantitative calculation of the predicted change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development, with the objective of achieving a net gain in biodiversity.

This report will also address how habitats will be enhanced and created to achieve a net gain in biodiversity units and how these habitats will be managed and monitored for at least 30 years. The following points will be covered (DEFRA, 2025a):

- How off-site gains and / or significant on-site enhancements will be managed, taking into account any legal restrictions and requirements (including additionality),
- When and how habitats will be monitored,
- When and how monitoring results will be reported,
- When and how management proposals will be reviewed,
- How habitats will be restored if the management plan is not working.

This report should be read in conjunction with the associated Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) document (Ecosupport, 2026).

1.2 Site Location and Description

The site is located along the northern outskirts of Haywards Heath, comprising of a parcel of land situated west of Gatesmead, RH16 1AN (centred on OS grid reference TQ 3314 2563 -Figure 1). The site comprises three grassland parcels separated by tree lines/ linear woodland, with the site encompassed by deciduous woodland habitat. The site is bounded to the west by the rail lineside estate, with residential housing development to the south and east, with an adjacent grassland parcel retained within a previous development scheme. The northern boundary supports ancient woodland which expands northwards, surrounding Haywards Heath golf course which is situated to the north of the site. The wider environ comprises predominantly of residential dwellings and urban infrastructure within the settlement of Haywards Heath to the south of the site, with woodland copses (including ancient woodland), linear hedgerow and arable pasture dominating the land use to the north of the site.

Figure 1. Aerial image of the site with redline boundary provided (DWG No. 25714/3350, PAD 2026)



1.3 Development Proposals

The proposed development will entail a full planning application for 49 new homes, together with open space and associated infrastructure (**Figure 2**).

[illegible]

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the assessment follows the Natural England Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat condition assessment protocols and uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool to calculate biodiversity losses and gains (DEFRA, 2025b).

2.1 Habitat Assessment

Habitats on site pre-development were identified in accordance with the categories specified for a UK Habitats survey using Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). This was chosen as an appropriate habitat categorisation system as it fits within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation. The habitat definitions used were based on those identified during the walkover undertaken on the 23rd April 2025, with an updated survey undertaken on 21st July 2025 by Ecosupport Ltd.

A condition assessment, in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1, was carried out on site by Principal Ecologist, Adam Jessop BSc MCIEEM and Project Ecologist, Louise Davies BSc ACIEEM, with Ecosupport on the 23rd April 2025, with an updated walkover undertaken on 21st July 2025. The area of identified habitats is calculated in hectares (ha), ignoring linear features or ditches (the area is measured to the centre line of such features). The length of linear features is measured separately in kilometres (km). The dominant habitat type was selected, according to those defined by UKHab Ltd (2023). Where there was disparity between the UK classification for habitat type and those present within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculator tool, this was noted within the condition assessment tables.

2.2 Habitat Distinctiveness

Each habitat was assigned a score for distinctiveness, according to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculator tool (DEFRA, 2025). This ranged from Poor - High for most habitats, or Not Applicable (e.g. Developed Land – Sealed Surface). Using the tool, habitats were assigned a score based on their distinctiveness.

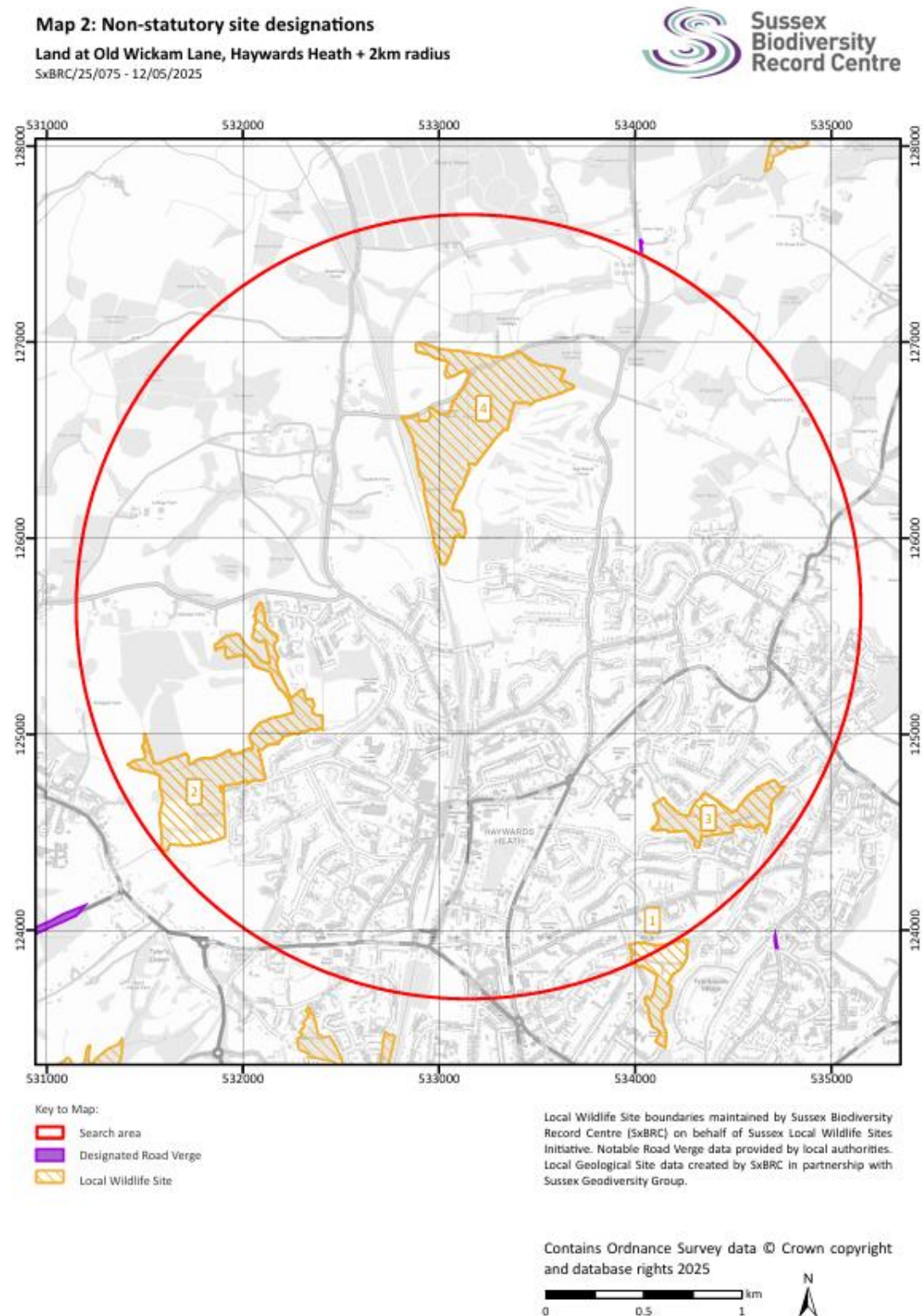
2.3 Habitat Condition

The condition of each habitat was assessed following criteria set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (DEFRA, 2025), which includes detailed assessment criteria for different habitats. Full results of the condition assessments can be found within **Section 3.0**. The condition of each habitat was assessed individually on site, but where the condition was found to be the same across several parcels, these were grouped together.

2.4 Strategic Significance

Each habitat was assigned a strategic significance in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (DEFRA, 2025). As shown in **Figure 3** below, the site lies to the south of Wickham Woods Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This LWS was designated mainly for supporting Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and it connects with the woodland in the north of the site, acting as a potential ecological corridor. As such, the on-site woodland has been identified as '*Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy*'. The remainder of on-site habitats have been categorised as 'area/compensation not in local strategy' under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

Figure 3. Map showing the non-statutory designated sites located within 2 km of the site boundary (SBIC, 2025).



2.5 Limitations

The initial survey was conducted outside of the optimal season for vascular flowering plants. Notwithstanding this, in addition to an updated survey visit undertaken in July 2025, during the numerous survey visits undertaken across the 2025 season, any notable observations of the on-site habitats were recorded and utilised to inform the overall ecological site assessment. As such, based on both this and the nature of the habitats present on site, it is not considered to be a significant constraint.

This survey does not constitute a full site assessment for Schedule 9 invasive plant species such as Japanese knotweed, but these were noted if found.

3. EXISTING HABITATS AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The vegetation within the site has been described below using classification terminology as described within Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The below species should not be considered an exhaustive list and instead refer to dominant, characteristic and other noteworthy species associated with each community within the survey area. A UKHab map showing the locations of the habitats present within the site has been included within Appendix A. The habitat types identified within the site comprises:

- w1f – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (30- Semi-Natural Woodland, 50 – Ditch)
- g3c – Other Neutral Grassland (16 – Tall Forbs, 503 – Wet)
- g3c8 – Holcus-Juncus Neutral Grassland
- g4 – Modified Grassland (32 – Scattered Trees, 106 – Mown)
- f2b – Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pastures
- h3f – Hawthorn Scrub
- h3d – Bramble Scrub
- g1c – Bracken

3.1 w1f – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (30 – Semi-Natural Woodland, 50 – Ditch)

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland habitat was present along the boundaries of the site, with the woodland situated along the northern boundary of the site comprising of ancient woodland habitat (with a number of ancient woodland indicator species recorded within the understory) , directly linked to the adjacent Wickham Woods SIN. A number of veteran trees were noted throughout the site, particularly along the eastern boundary of the site, with a public footpath running along this section of the site. The woodland understory throughout the site was generally well developed, with sections of Hazel coppice and young saplings present. Tree species noted included Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Lords & Ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*), Dogs Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Wild Garlic (*Allium ursinum*), Golden Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) and Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) recorded in the understory.

3.2 g3c – Other Neutral Grassland (16 – Tall Forbs, 503 – Wet)

Other neutral grassland habitat was noted within the north-eastern portion of the site, with damper areas noted adjacent to the rush pasture situated in close proximity. In contrast to the adjacent modified grassland, these grassland parcels generally were managed to support a tall sward height, with scrub noted to encroach along the boundaries of this habitat. Species noted included Field Wood-Rush (*Luzula campestris*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*).

Figure 4. View of a section of g4 grassland habitat present along the northern boundary of the site, with a section of f2b rush pasture present in the foreground. Taken from the eastern boundary facing north-west (April, 2025).



Figure 5. View of a section of g4 grassland habitat present along western boundary of the site, with sections of the w1f woodland which encompasses the site visible along the sites northern and western boundary. Taken from the eastern boundary facing north (July, 2025).



3.3 g3c8 – Holcus-Juncus Neutral Grassland

A small area of Holcus-Juncus neutral grassland was noted along the southern boundary of the site. Compact Rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*) coverage was frequent, with Yorkshire Fog, Creeping

Buttercup, Sweet Vernal Grass, Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) and Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*) also recorded.

3.4 g4 – Modified Grassland (32 – Scattered Trees, 106 – Mown)

Modified grassland was the dominant habitat recorded on site, with variation of the structural diversity of the sward noted, with longer and short areas created through management of the public footpaths that are present throughout the site. The central field was predominantly rabbit grazed, with sporadic areas of bare ground noted throughout. The grassland was noted to support a forb density of consistently > 6 species / m² with species noted including Sweet Vernal Grass, Yorkshire Fog, Meadow Buttercup, Creeping Buttercup, Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*), Bramble, Self-heal, Marsh thistle, Dog Violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Thyme leaved speedwell (*Veronica serpyllifolia*).

Figure 6. View of a section of g4 grassland habitat present along the northern boundary of the site. Taken from the eastern boundary facing west (April, 2025).



3.5 f2b – Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pastures

Areas of rush pasture habitat were present within the north-eastern portion of the site where the ground conditions were notably damper. Compact Rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*) was the dominant rush, with Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Sharp Rush (*Juncus acutus*) also noted. Herbaceous coverage was generally good with 7 species / m² recorded, with species including Cuckoo Flower, Common Sorrel, Ragwort, Creeping Buttercup, Meadow Buttercup, Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*), Birds Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Sweet Vernal Grass, Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*) and Small-leaved Willowherb (*Epilobium parviflorum*) recorded within this habitat.

Figure 7. View of a section of f2b rush pasture habitat present along the eastern boundary of the site. Taken from the eastern boundary facing south-west (July, 2025).



3.6 h3f – Hawthorn Scrub

A small section of Hawthorn dominated scrub was recorded along the northern boundary of the southern grassland parcel, with Elder also present.

3.7 h3d – Bramble Scrub

A small section of linear Bramble dominated scrub was present along a section of the sites north-western boundary.

3.8 g1c - Bracken

A small patch of Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) was noted along the northern boundary of the southern grassland field parcel, with scattered Hawthorn and Elder shrubs present.

3.9 Baseline Condition Assessment

The following tables provide details as to the condition assessments undertaken of the non-linear (**Table 1**) and linear (**Table 2**) habitats present on site with reference to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2023b).

Table 1. Existing non-linear habitats present on site including details as to their condition and the condition assessment criteria that have been met / failed as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025).

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition	Condition Assessment Notes	Strategic Significance	Parcel Reference - Location Notes
Modified Grassland	2.580	Good	A series of large parcels of grassland spanning the site from north to south. Species diversity consistently comprised of >6 species per m ² across the site with noted species typical of modified grassland habitat, with the parcel a mixture of short and long sward. Specifically, passes criteria: A, B, C, E, F & G.	Area not in local strategy.	MG1-6, MG8
Modified Grassland	0.375	Poor	Several small parcels of grassland across the site, comprising of <6 species per m ² across the site. In addition, some areas were dominated by scrub and levels of damage and bare ground cover were both high. Specifically, fails essential criteria A.	Area not in local strategy.	MG7, MG9, MG10
Other Neutral Grassland	0.669	Moderate	Parcels of grassland located to the north-east of the site. The grassland consistently comprised of characteristic indicator species relevant to Other Neutral Grassland such as Meadow Buttercup, Common Sorrel and Lesser Stitchwort. Invasive Creeping Buttercup was present. Specifically, passes criteria: A, C, D	Area not in local strategy.	ONG1 & 3
Other Neutral Grassland	0.025	Poor	A parcel that stretches across the north-east corner of the site, forming a pathway used frequently by walkers. Species diversity was low, sward height was not varied, and bare ground cover was high. Indicator species characteristic to the habitat type were not present.	Area not in local strategy.	ONG2

			Specifically, fails essential criteria A.		
Tall Forbs	0.059	Poor	A parcel of tall forbs to the western boundary of the site. The parcel lacks variation in vegetation structure and flowering plants to support invertebrates. Invasive species were not present. Specifically, passes criteria: C	Area not in local strategy.	TF1
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures	0.266	Moderate	Multiple parcels located to the north-east corner of the site. A wide variety of indicator species relevant to the habitat type were present, including Compact Rush, Birds Foot Trefoil, and Meadowsweet. No leaf litter was present and the parcel exhibited high species diversity of >8/m². The water level table was not at or near the surface. Specifically, passes criteria: B, C, D, E, F, G.	Area not in local strategy.	RP 1-3
Mixed Scrub	0.007	Poor	Very small parcel of elder and hawthorn scrub located to the centre of the site. Only the two aforementioned woody species were present, with a lack of age variation between shrubs and no developed edge or clearings with the scrub. No invasive non-native species were present. Specifically, passes criteria: C	Area not in local strategy.	MS1

Bramble Scrub	0.106	Condition Assessment N/A	Condition Assessment N/A	Area not in local strategy.	BS 3-5
Bracken	0.103	Condition Assessment N/A	Condition Assessment N/A	Area not in local strategy.	BRACK1-3
Other Neutral Grassland	0.043	Moderate	Holcus juncus grassland located near the southern boundary of the site. A good amount of indicator species were present, including Meadow Sweet, Cuckoo Flower and Vernal Grass. The sward height was varied, and minimal bracken and scrub cover were noted. No invasive species or physical damage was present. Species density per m ² was less than 10. Specifically, passes criteria: A, B, C, D, E. Fails essential criteria F.	Area not in local strategy.	HJ1
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	0.263	Good	Woodland present mainly to the western boundary of the site, with a number of smaller parcels to the east and north. A range of age-classes were present, with no evidence of browsing damage and no invasive species noted. The number of native tree species was >5, and at least 80% of canopy and understory shrubs were native. Temporary open space was present in around 10-20% of the woodland, and all three classes of tree were present (larger trees 4-7cm diameter at breast height, saplings and seedlings). Tree mortality was minimal (<10%), with no evidence of pests or diseases and no crown dieback. A recognisable	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy.	W1-W5

			woodland NVC plant community was present at ground level, and at least two storeys of canopy were present across survey plots. Veteran trees were present within the woodland at a density of at least two trees per hectare, and at least 50% of survey plots featured deadwood. Less than 1 hectare in total across the woodland was assessed as nutrient enriched, and minimal damaged ground was present. Condition Assessment Results are as follows: A3, B3, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, H3, I2, J2, K3, L3, M2. Total Score = 36 out of 39.		
Rural Tree	0.02	Moderate	A group of five small trees to the east of the site. Each tree was native (Oak), although none were mature. Little evidence of human impacts on tree health was observed, but limited ecological niches were present such as cavities or deadwood, due to the young ages of the trees. Over 20% of the canopy of each tree was oversailing vegetation. Specifically, passes criteria: A, B, D, F.	Area not in local strategy.	East of site within parcel BRACK1.
Rural Tree	0.153	Good	Two very large trees located centrally to the site. Both trees were native (Oak) and mature, with significant natural ecological niches such as cavities and loose bark. There was little evidence of adverse impact on tree health by human activities and more than 20% of the canopy was oversailing vegetation beneath. Specifically, passes criteria: A, B, C, D, E, F	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy.	Both central to the site within MG2.

Rural Tree	0.229	Good	Three very large veteran trees located centrally to the site. All three trees were native (Oak) and mature, with significant natural ecological niches such as cavities and loose bark. There was little evidence of adverse impact on tree health by human activities and more than 20% of the canopy was oversailing vegetation beneath. Specifically, passes criteria: A, B, C, D, E ,F	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy.	Central to site, two within MG2 and one within TF1.
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Table 2. Existing linear habitats present on site including details as to their condition and the condition assessment criteria that have been met / failed as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025).

Habitat Type	Length (km)	Condition	Condition Assessment Notes	Strategic Significance	Parcel Reference - Location Notes
Ecologically Valuable Line of Trees	0.179	Moderate	Made up of primarily native species such as Oak and Silver Birch, the line of trees extends across the centre of the site and towards the south. One or more trees included veteran features and at least 95% of the trees within the line were in a healthy condition. No naturally vegetated strip was present on either side of the line of trees, and the tree canopy was not noted to be continuous, with gaps present making up >10% of canopy cover. Specifically, passes criteria: A, C, E	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy.	LOT1

4. PROPOSED CREATED HABITATS & NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

4.1 On-Site Proposals

Following consultation with Crest Nicholson Operations Limited and David Jarvis Associates, in order to minimise the loss of biodiversity on site, non-linear and linear habitats are being retained and created as set out in **Table 3** and **Table 4** below. Please refer to the **Post-Development Layout appended** for information on the locations of these habitats in line with landscape plan drawing, DWG No. 3403-5-2-1-DR-0001-S4-P5 (David Jarvis Associates, 2026). Tables have been provided as appropriate to indicate the targeted condition for each of the habitat types and which criteria will need to be met in order to achieve the desired condition.

Section 5.0 details the proposed planting and ongoing management required to ensure the stated condition criteria are met for each habitat type. This report (including planting and management specifications) has been prepared in conjunction with David Jarvis Associates based on the 'Landscape General Arrangement' (David Jarvis Associates, 2026).

4.1.1 Non-Linear Habitats

Table 3 indicates those habitats due to be retained, enhanced and created on site with details provided, where appropriate, as to how the necessary condition criteria will be met.

Table 3. Non-linear habitats to be retained, enhanced and created on site including details as to the condition assessment criteria that must be met in order to achieve the targeted condition (the necessary planting and management required to achieve the stated condition criteria is detailed in **Section 5.0**). The areas have been separated for the purposes of outlining additionality for the proposed ANRG/ Nutrient Neutrality areas.

Habitat Type	Action	Area (ha)	Target Condition	Condition Assessment Notes	Strategic Significance	Parcel Reference - Location Notes
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	Created	0.522	N/A – Other	N/A	Area not in local strategy.	N/A - Constructed buildings within the development site.
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	Created	0.831	N/A – Other	N/A	Area not in local strategy.	N/A - Located throughout the site (roads, driveways, pavements etc).
Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface	Created	0.142	N/A – Other	N/A	Area not in local strategy.	N/A – Footpaths located throughout the site.

Vegetated Garden	Created	0.766	N/A – Other	N/A	Area not in local strategy.	N/A - Front and back gardens for dwellings within the development site.
Introduced Shrub	Created	0.065	Condition Assessment N/A	N/A	Area not in local strategy.	IS1-27 – Located across site in between buildings and on road verges
Sustainable Drainage System	Created	0.034	Poor	N/A	Area not in local strategy.	SUDS1 – Located to the north-east of the site.
Mixed Scrub	Created	0.098	Good	Mixed Scrub will be created in good condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, the criteria targeted are A, B, C, D and E, with a suitable mix of native scrub species chosen to include at least three native woody species. Removal of invasive species and suitable planting regimes can maintain the needed diversity in age classes and overall scrub health. Selective clearance and maintenance of the buffer zone between adjacent habitats can	Area not in local strategy.	MS6, 7 & 15 – Mainly to the eastern boundary of the site.

				achieve the needed clearings and well-developed edge.		
Mixed Scrub	Created	0.061	Moderate	Mixed Scrub will be created in moderate condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, the criteria targeted are A, B and C, with a suitable mix of native scrub species chosen to include at least three native woody species. Removal of invasive species and suitable planting regimes can maintain the needed diversity in age classes and overall scrub health.	Area not in local strategy.	MS1, 2, 5, 8, 16 – Spread throughout site.
Mixed Scrub	Created	0.028	Poor	No conditions required to be targeted to achieve 'poor' condition as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025).	Area not in local strategy.	MS3, 4 & 9 - 14 – Small sections of scrub around footpaths to the boundaries of the site.

Modified Grassland	Created	0.052	Good	Modified grassland will be created in good condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria A, B, C, D, E, F and G be targeted for achievement with sowing of an appropriate seed mix (to achieve the desired 6-8 plant species per m ²) and management implemented to minimise cover of scrub, bracken and invasive species. The locations chosen are either far from pathways/roads or are fenced off from public access and can be managed with variation in sward length.	Area not in local strategy.	MG2 & 7 – Fenced area to west of site along boundary.
Modified Grassland	Created	0.327	Moderate	Modified grassland will be created in moderate condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria A, C, E, F and G be targeted for achievement with sowing of an appropriate seed mix (to achieve the desired 6-8 plant species per m ²) and management implemented to minimise cover of scrub, bracken and invasive species.	Area not in local strategy.	MG1, 3, 4, 6 & 16 – Towards the south of the site.
Modified Grassland	Created	0.361	Poor	No conditions required to be targeted to achieve 'poor' condition as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025).	Area not in local strategy.	MG5, 8 10 - 15, 17 & 18 – Public access areas or mown footpaths/buffers

Other Neutral Grassland	Created	0.021	Good	Other Neutral Grassland of good condition will be created in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria A, B, C, D and F will be targeted for achievement with sowing of an appropriate seed mix and appropriate management to minimise bare ground, scrub and bracken and maintain a varied sward height.	Area not in local strategy.	ONG10, 5 & 17 – Along the western boundary of the site.
Other Neutral Grassland	Created	0.609	Moderate	Other Neutral Grassland of moderate condition will be created in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria A, B, C and D will be targeted for achievement with sowing of an appropriate seed mix and appropriate management to minimise bare ground, scrub and bracken and maintain a varied sward height.	Area not in local strategy.	ONG1, 4, 7, 11 -14, 16 & 20-28 – Predominantly in the southern section of the site.
Other Neutral Grassland	Created	0.101	Poor	No conditions required to be targeted to achieve 'poor' condition as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025).	Area not in local strategy.	ONG2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 18, 19, 29 & 30 – mostly central to the site near areas of high traffic or footpaths.
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures	Retained	0.03	Moderate	Rush Pasture of moderate condition will be retained and maintained at current condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria B, C, D, E, F, G will be targeted, through maintenance of existing habitat and water supplies. Removal of scrub and invasive species,	Area not in local strategy.	RP4 – To the north of site.

				treatment of bare ground, and removal of excessive leaf litter cover will be utilised to maintain the given condition.		
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures	Created (Translocated)	0.236	Moderate	Rush Pasture of moderate condition will be created/ maintained in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). This will be achieved through the translocation of Rush Pasture habitat present on site. Specifically, criteria B, C, D, E, F, G will be targeted, through maintenance of existing habitat and water supplies. Removal of scrub and invasive species, treatment of bare ground, and removal of excessive leaf litter cover will be utilised to maintain the given condition.	Area not in local strategy.	RP1-3 – Two large parcels to the south of the site and one surrounding the SUDS basin to the north.
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	Retained	0.223	Good	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland of good condition will be retained and maintained at current condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, targeted criteria (and respective score) will be A3, B3, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, H3, I2, J2, K3, L3 and M2. By retaining existing trees and growth (particularly veteran trees), sufficient age classes and native species diversity can be maintained. Removal of invasive species, monitoring for browsing damage and disease and prevention of nutrient enrichment	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy.	W1-5 – Main area to the west of site.

				can be implemented as part of management. In addition, not removing deadwood and allowing saplings and seedlings to naturally regenerate can enhance conditions further.		
Individual Trees (Urban)	Created	0.208	Moderate	51 No. urban trees of moderate condition will be created in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria B, D and F will be targeted for achievement with appropriate management implemented to prevent adverse impacts to health and trees placed within suitable green space areas where at least 20% of the canopy will oversail vegetation beneath. Where possible planted trees will comprise of native species to achieve criteria A.	Area not in local strategy.	Throughout site, predominantly to the south and central green spaces.
Individual Trees (Rural)	Retained	0.229	Good	Five trees are to be retained on site (three of which are classified as Veteran) and maintained their current good condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria A, B, C, D, E and F will be targeted for achievement with appropriate management implemented to prevent adverse impacts to health by human activities and maintenance of tree canopies where needed. Natural ecological niches such as cavities and mature status are already present,	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy.	Central to site within green spaces.

				and as such should be left to progress naturally, with monitoring of tree health where required.		
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4.1.2 Linear Habitats

Table 4 indicates those linear habitats due to be retained, enhanced and created on site with details provided, where appropriate, as to how the necessary condition criteria will be met.

Table 4. Linear habitats to be retained, enhanced and created on site including details as to the condition assessment criteria that must be met in order to achieve the targeted condition (the necessary planting and management required to achieve the stated condition criteria is detailed in **Section 5.0**).

Habitat Type	Action	Length (km)	Target Condition	Condition Assessment Notes	Strategic Significance	Parcel Reference - Location Notes
Native Hedgerow with Trees	Created	0.264	Moderate	Native Hedgerow with Trees of moderate condition will be created in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025). Specifically, criteria A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, E2 will be targeted, through maintenance of the ground surrounding the hedgerow and removal of invasive species. The health of the hedgerow will be monitored, and a suitable height and width will be maintained.	Area not in local strategy.	NHWT1-7 – To the south of the site bordering the ‘nature area’ and in the middle of the site within the POS area.
Native Hedgerow	Created	0.277	Poor	No conditions required to be targeted to achieve ‘poor’ condition as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (Defra, 2025).	Area not in local strategy.	NH1-14 – Spread across the site in various locations.

4.2 Metric Calculation

Following the incorporation of the above measures into the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric, **on site there is a net loss of -38.46% in area habitats (or -13.25 habitat units) and the trading rules are not satisfied (Figure 8). A further 3.44 area habitat units are required to achieve a 10% net gain.** Therefore, the requirement of a 10% net gain for biodiversity has not been achieved on site and as such further measures are required through off-site habitat enhancement. A more than sufficient gain has been achieved for hedgerow habitats within the proposed development scheme.

Figure 8. Screenshot of the 'headline results' output from the BNG assessment undertaken for the site using the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-13.25
	Hedgerow units	0.58
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-38.46%
	Hedgerow units	40.61%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	

4.3 Applying the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

The proposed habitat retention, enhancement and creation described in the above sections follows the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy as detailed within paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DLUHC, 2024). The below sections cover each of the elements of the hierarchy and how we have sought to address them in this scheme (as there is a need for off-site credits):

- Avoid:** The habitats of highest value have, where possible, been retained which includes translocation of rush pasture habitat to suitable on-site locations and avoidance of impacts to the majority of woodland habitat bounding the site. Notwithstanding this, due to the quantum of residential development, some habitats in the form of modified grassland, bracken, bramble scrub, other neutral grassland, hedgerow, lowland mixed deciduous woodland (proposed access route), mixed scrub and individual trees could not be retained. Notwithstanding this avoidance and subsequent restoration/ enhancement of retained habitat will be undertaken as necessary.
- Mitigate:** In order to mitigate (in-part) for the loss of the on-site habitats, a total of 51 trees will be planted throughout the site to provide alternative habitat opportunities following the loss of trees on-site. Modified grassland, other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, and hedgerow habitat will also be created post works to offset the loss of these habitats from the baseline. Furthermore, the scheme has been designed to retain as much of this habitat type in situ as possible, with sensitive translocation of this habitat to be undertaken within the SUDs basin and appropriate locations identified within the southern grassland area on site to ensure that there is no net-loss of this habitat on site.

- **Offset:** Given the constraints of the site it is not possible to deliver the full net gain on site while delivering much needed housing. Therefore, the remaining impacts will be offset through the use of an offsite provider such as a registered habitat bank (see **Section 4.4** below). Therefore, the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy has been followed when addressing the BNG requirements for the site.

4.4 Off-Setting

Based on the current site layout, it has not been possible to achieve the necessary 10% net gain or satisfy trading rules within the constraints of the site. Therefore, based on the 'Headline Results' tab, **a total of 16.69 habitat units would be required to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain for this development.** Due to the habitat deficit arising from a lack of 'high' (same habitat required), 'medium' (same broad habitat required or higher distinctiveness) and 'low' (same distinctiveness or higher required) distinctiveness units, to address the deficit the following credits will have to be purchased to satisfy the trading rules and achieve a 10% net gain.

- 0.61 units of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- 1.17 units of Other Neutral Grassland (same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness units)
- 12.63 units of Low distinctiveness units (or higher distinctiveness units)

In order to offset the current habitat deficit, it is understood that biodiversity credits will be purchased. Units can be purchased either privately (with sites legally secured through a conservation covenant or S106 agreement and registered to the 'Biodiversity Gain Site Register') or through dedicated providers such as the Environment Bank which can provide the required units/ credits which can be purchased to offset the footprint of this development.

5. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

This section provides an outline of the habitat management prescriptions to create and enhance the proposed habitats within the site to meet the desired condition criteria for the purposes of delivering biodiversity net gain. It is anticipated that a comprehensive management plan for the delivery of off-site habitat units will be prepared following the finalisation of offsetting schemes.

5.1 Protection of Retained Habitats

All of the habitats to be retained will be protected from damage during the works. Heras fencing will be erected surrounding retained trees, the retained rush pasture and along the site boundaries to prevent accidental damage to the adjacent woodland habitats. Where large mature trees are present, they will be protected using standard arboricultural tree protection measures which include protection of the canopy and prevention of root compaction.

No vehicles will enter the protective ring fencing, and no materials will be stored within their circumference. All protective fencing must be in place prior to any construction machinery arriving on site, before any works on site get underway, and will remain in place until all work is completed. This will minimise the level of disturbance within these habitats during the works and ensure the habitats and any wildlife species that may be using them are protected.

5.2 Modified Grassland

5.2.1 Proposed Planting

Modified grassland parcels will be created across the development with 'poor' condition targeted for POS areas, 'moderate' condition for the southern open natural space, and 'good' condition within the fenced off area being isolated for pipeline access only. These grasslands will be seeded with Emorsgate EM1 – General Purpose Meadow Mixture or similar (approved by an ecologist).

5.2.2 Management

The sowing of these seeds will be completed either during the Spring (March-May) or the late Summer (August-October) when the temperatures are warm, and the ground is dry. The seed must be surface sown at an even distribution throughout the entire landscaped area.

Whilst it is anticipated that the grassland parcels close to residential areas and mown footpaths will be regularly maintained, with areas close to residential areas anticipated to be maintained to a height of 30-50mm during April to August and 50-70mm throughout the year. It is anticipated that grassland areas within the natural open space to the south will be allowed to develop varied sward structures through rotational mowing regimes.

First year management: During the first year the grassland areas must be regularly maintained to the above noted heights every 3-4 weeks (or more frequently as needed) to prevent the establishment of weeds. All arisings must be taken from site to prevent the addition of too many nutrients into the soil.

If necessary, glyphosate-based weed killer can be used to spot treat any areas with dense patches of Nettles or Bramble.

Management Once Established: Once the seed is established after the first year, regular mowing is still expected which will result in a shorter sward height however grass should not be cut lower than 30mm.

Targeted scrub, bracken and invasive plant removal should also be carried out as needed to prevent encroachment into the grassland.

5.3 Other Neutral Grassland (Wildflower Meadow)

5.3.1 Proposed Planting & Enhancement

Similarly to the modified grassland creation, parcels of other neutral grassland will be planted across the site, with areas near POS and footpaths being targeted at 'poor' condition, whereas areas within the open natural space to the south will be targeted for 'moderate' condition. These grassland areas will be established via sowing of a suitable wildflower mix such as Emorsgate EM1F – General Purpose Wild Flower Mixture which comprises of other neutral grassland indicator species such as Common Knapweed (*Centurea nigra*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Self Heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), and Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*). The sowing of these seeds will be completed either during the Spring (March-May) or the late Summer (August-October) when the temperatures are warm, and the ground is dry. The seed must be surface sown at an even distribution throughout the entire landscaped area.

5.3.2 Management

Wildflower areas do not require any additional watering or fertilizer. Cutting a meadow and removing the clippings retains low nutrient levels in the soil and suppresses coarse grasses which would otherwise out-compete the wildflowers. It is recommended the wildflower grassland undergoes two annual cuts. The cut grass should be dried on site. Cuttings should be left in situ for approximately one week, after this the arisings are to be removed from site.

First year management: Perennial species take at least a full year to establish. For newly sown areas the first summer will be dominated by annual weeds (species indicative of sub-optimal condition) arising from the soil seed bank and by grass growth. This should be controlled by mowing throughout the first year to minimise competition and weed seed production.

Management Once Established: After the first year, the wildflower areas will be mown in Spring to 100mm and will then be left to flower through to late July/August. This is beneficial for nesting birds, which do not fledge until late July, as well as insects and other wildlife. After flowering, the area will undergo a hay cut with growth reduced to 50mm.

To maintain maximum flowering interest and a varied sward height, sections of each grassland parcel should be managed at different times between August and September. Varying the mowing times

from year to year is the best way to maintain a diverse balanced sward and minimise cover of sub-optimal species.

Targeted scrub and bracken removal will also need to be carried out as necessary to prevent encroachment into the grassland.

5.4 Individual (Urban) Trees

5.4.1 Proposed Planting

A total of 51 trees will be planted across the site. Species to be planted include Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Loebner Magnolia 'Merrill' (*Magnolia × loebneri* 'Merrill'), Crab Apple 'Golden Hornet' (*Malus* 'Golden Hornet'), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Autumn Cherry (*Prunus × subhirtella* 'Autumnalis'), Callery Pear 'Chanticleer' (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'), English Oak (*Quercus robur*), Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*), Rowan 'Sheerwater Seedling' (*Sorbus aucuparia* 'Sheerwater Seedling'), Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) and Elm 'Lobel' (*Ulmus* 'Lobel').

Planting will be carried out in the first year. The best time to plant is late autumn and it is recommended to avoid freezing temperatures or heat. Rootgrow or Bonemeal will be applied to the new plants to encourage healthy root growth.

5.4.2 Management

5.4.1 Mycorrhizal Treatment

To ensure a successful establishment of the newly planted trees, it is recommended that mycorrhizal treatment to the tree roots is conducted **during the planting**, this would reduce the risk of tree mortality and increase the long-term tolerance of these trees to periods of drought or adverse soil conditions thus ensuring a higher chance of successful long-term establishment.

5.4.2 Weed Management

All newly planted trees must have a 1-metre exclusion zone whereby weeds are routinely and proactively removed for the **first 2 – 3 years**. Bark mulch is recommended around each tree and will act as an effective management method to also suppress weed colonisation.

5.4.3 Pruning

The trees will be subject to light pruning as required in October to ensure that they are developing healthy growth forms (but pruning will not be extensive enough to restrict expected canopy or height for their species).

5.4.4 Monitoring and Replacement

Trees will be inspected every 3 years by a suitably experienced arborist **during late winter – early spring of each year when required**. These monitoring visits will assess the general health of the trees and determine if any remedial action is required, including noting any presence of disease. As part of

these monitoring visits, the arborist will produce a monitoring report which will be sent to the LPA outlining the results and appropriate recommendations (i.e. remedial works, removal /replacement). Any plants that are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective shall be replaced like for like in the next planting season.

5.5 Rush Pasture

5.5.1 Proposed Translocation

The scheme has been designed to retain as much rush pasture habitat in situ as possible, with sensitive translocation of this habitat to be undertaken within the SUDs basin and other appropriate locations identified on site to ensure that there is no net-loss of this habitat on site. Further details can be obtained in the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport, 2026).

Prior to the commencement of the translocation, the donor site will be cut to 50-75mm above ground level (this will be done in 2 stage approach to avoid impacts to reptiles as outlined in the EcIA) with arising removed. The initial proposed methodology suggested the removal of the rush pasture by excavating it with a substantial depth of topsoil, ensuring the inclusion of the rushes' roots and rhizomes. This will either be collected as turves or loose soil depending on the ground conditions. Where feasible to do so, translocation works should take place during the dormant season for terrestrial habitats in October – February. In the first instance all material should be transported on the same day, however where this is not possible (i.e. prior to the preparation of the receptor/ SUDs basin or until they are fully formed), the turves/ soil will be stored in a pile and covered on top and sides with black plastic or tarpaulin to prevent it from drying out, but not fully sealed. This way it can be stored for several months until it can be planted around the new SUDs on the site and promote viability of the translocation works.

5.5.2 Management

Butterfly Conservation (2026) and English Nature (2004) recommend the following approach to the ongoing management of rush pasture. On sites with high botanical and invertebrate interest, a small-scale, phased approach is required. Rush should not be cut in a single operation, as this risks removing both the rush itself and the associated wildlife.

Management should be undertaken annually utilising a brush-cutter with a blade, cutting just above ground level to avoid scalping or damaging the underlying mosses, sedges and other small plants. Patches should be cut at a size that allows the arisings to be removed easily. Cutting should take place after the end of August and before March, ensuring no young birds are present. All cut material should be raked off and removed to allow smaller plants to recover and to reduce rush regeneration from seed.

In the second year, patches adjacent to those cut previously should be targeted, allowing the cut areas to expand gradually across the rush-dominated habitat. The aim is to treat all rushy areas over a four- to five-year cycle before returning to the first patches. This approach should create a structurally varied sward, with the shortest areas remaining at least 5 cm high by late autumn.

Targeted scrub, bracken and invasive plant removal should also be carried out as needed to prevent encroachment into the rush pasture.

5.6 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs)

5.6.1 Proposed Planting

One SUDs basin will be created within the north-eastern portion of the site which is anticipated to comprise a predominantly dry basin. The basin will be enhanced through the sowing of a wildflower mixture such as Emorsgate EM8 Meadow Mixture for Wetlands (*or similar as approved by an ecologist*) to encourage the development of a variety of native species. The seed mix is suitable for seasonally wet soils that may flood for short periods in winter but are typically well drained in summer.

Additional planting within the basin and along the top of the banks will be undertaken along with translocating the rush pasture habitat into the banks / margins of the SUDs feature. The basin planting will include Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Dotted Loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctata*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*). Species to be planted along the top of the banks include Goat's Beard (*Aruncus dioicus*), Greater Pond Sedge (*Carex riparia*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Rose Campion (*Lychnis coronaria*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Common Bistort (*Persicaria bistorta*) and Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum aquilegifolium*).

5.6.2 Management

Wildflower areas do not require any additional watering or fertilizer. Cutting a meadow and removing the clippings retains low nutrient levels in the soil and suppresses coarse grasses which would otherwise out-compete the wildflowers. It is recommended the wildflower grassland undergoes two annual cuts. The cut grass should be dried on site. Cuttings should be left in situ for approximately one week, after this the arisings are to be removed from site. Management of the rush pasture translocated within the SUDs margin should be managed in line with the guidance set out in **Section 5.5**.

First year management: During the first-year annual weed growth will be targeted to encourage the development of perennial ground cover which will be achieved through regular maintenance of the grassland areas to a height of 50-75mm (during dry periods). All arisings must be taken from site following cuts to prevent the addition of too many nutrients into the soil.

Management Once Established: Once the seed is established (it may take several years for full colonisation to be successful), due to the seasonal flooding of the SUDs features, it is anticipated that this feature will be managed as a meadow/grassland. After the first year, the grassland should be cut to 100mm in Spring. Management should then ensure that the feature is not cut through to July/August to give sown species opportunity to flower, prior to a main summer cut followed by cuts in autumn and spring (as required/ during drier periods). Management to reduce the sward height however should not be lower than 50mm.

Targeted scrub, bracken and invasive plant removal should also be carried out as needed to prevent encroachment into the habitat.

5.7 Mixed Scrub

5.7.1 Proposed Planting

Within the areas of Mixed Scrub to be created, native planting will be undertaken to ensure at least 3 native woody species are present with no one species dominant. Species to be planted include Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Alder Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), Osier (*Salix viminalis*) and Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*) in line with the landscape planting schedule (David Jarvis Associates, 2026).

Shrubs will be planted at 1m centres to allow foraging (1.2/m²) to avoid creating dense clusters. The best time to plant is late autumn and it is recommended to avoid freezing temperatures or heat. The scrub will become denser and more connected as it grows up.

5.7.2 Invasive / Undesirable Species Removal

Throughout all of the mixed scrub parcels, removal of invasive species will be undertaken as necessary if any are to establish on site.

5.7.3 General Management

Following establishment, scrub will require minimal ongoing management however the following measures can be employed as necessary:

- New scrub will be weeded following first planting and watered whenever necessary during the first growing season.
- Scrub will be cut back annually as needed to ensure the area does not become overgrown and thinned every five years. Different areas of scrub will be cut back / thinned on rotation in order to ensure a diverse age range (seedlings, sapling, young shrubs and mature shrubs) persists.
- Any existing or later establishing Bramble will be reduced in density and will be maintained at approximately 15% density within the scrub patches.
- Ongoing management will be undertaken to prevent successional scrub developing within the adjacent grassland areas.
- Management must take into account the requirement for maintaining habitat connectivity across the site. Should any such vegetation die or its density become sparse, additional planting will be undertaken, replacing like-for-like.

All management of trees and scrub will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which spans February – August inclusive (Natural England, 2015). A well-developed edge will be encouraged by employing a less intensive mowing regime for the surrounding grassland in order to encourage a longer sward height. As part of this process, scalloped edges will be created to provide a variety of shade and temperature conditions for invertebrates and reptiles.

5.8 Hedgerow

5.8.1 Proposed Planting

Native hedgerows and native hedgerows with trees will be created across the site. Hedgerows planted within POS areas are anticipated to be maintained as short (<1m) boundary hedgerows and will be created in 'poor' condition, whereas the hedgerows within the open natural space to the south will be created in 'moderate' condition in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 (DEFRA, 2025).

Species to be planted include Field Maple, Dogwood, Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Blackthorn, English Oak, Dog-rose and Wayfaring Tree (*Viburnum lantana*). These are recommended to be interwoven with climbers, such as Traveller's-joy (*Clematis vitalba*) and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*).

5.8.2 Hedgerow Management

The most favourable approach to managing hedgerows for the benefits of biodiversity is to encourage minimal interference and ensure when there is any cutting, it does so after autumn fruiting (so late winter is preferable). The key points of the management prescriptions will therefore be as follows (adopting recommendations as outlined within Bright and MacPherson 2002):

- Cutting will be done on a 3-year cycle (part of the hedges on site cut during the first year, another part of the hedges cut during second year and no cutting during the third year), to provide sustained foraging opportunities across the site every active season. Hedgerows will be allowed to develop into a tall, dense, bushy structures and maintained at a height of 3 – (preferably 4) meters.
- A proportion of hedges (at least 30%) should be left to grow for at least 7 – 10 years.
- Not all hedgerows should be cut in any one year, so some heavy fruiting hedges are always present. Flails should not be used if possible, meaning management works will likely involve cutting using hand tools
- Coppicing or laying should be used to manage any of the hedgerows on site which become gappy or sparse
- If the size of the hedgerow needs to be reduced, avoid cutting the top and cut one side.

Targeted removal of invasive species will be carried out as necessary.

5.8.3 Monitoring

Annual monitoring will take place of the newly planted hedgerow for the first 3 years, with bi-annual monitoring between 4-10 years. This will be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist during late winter – early spring of each year. These monitoring visits will assess the general health of the hedgerow and determine if any remedial action is required (some of which are outlined below such as replacement planting or altering the frequency of cuts).

5.8.4 Replacement

Any plants that are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective during the 10- year monitoring period of planting shall be replaced like for like in the next planting season.

5.9 Compliance Check

A compliance visit will be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist once the construction phase of the development has been completed. The check will be conducted annually for the first 5 years post-completion, and every 5-years thereafter until year 30. The compliance check will be carried out during a suitable time of year and in suitable weather conditions. The ecologist will check the condition of all of the habitats on site to assess if they have been achieved and make an assessment if any recommended changes are required to management.

On completion of the visit, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) monitoring report will be compiled, including the following:

- Assessment of habitats against the objectives defined in this management plan;
- Any presence of target species noted during the compliance check;
- Date stamped photographic evidence taken from fixed monitoring points, of which will be the central point of each land parcel per habitat type as listed in **Section 4.0**, during the first compliance check after the construction phase;
- Detailed site notes including a condition assessment for each habitat type listed in **Section 4.0** (where appropriate) using the condition criteria within the Technical Annex 1 (DEFRA, 2025);
- Detailed specific recommendations on management actions to promote growth and establishment of target species / habitats including timescales for undertaking actions (if required) and marked site plans to show the actions;
- Management of the above recommended actions must be carried out in the next phase and report of any details;
- Each BNG monitoring report will be written up in accordance with the BNG Habitat Monitoring Report template provided by Natural England (2024) and will be sent to the LPA.

5.10 Safeguarding

The developer and project manager will be responsible for briefing all site personnel of the ecological sensitivities of the site and implementing the habitat enhancement, creation and management measures outlined within **Sections 4.0 & 5.0**. If any protected species are encountered during the construction works, it will be the responsibility of the project manager to cease works and immediately contact an ecologist for advice.

5.11 Post-Construction Habitat Creation

Table 5 below depicts the indicative timings associated with the habitat creation and enhancements to be undertaken after all construction works on site have been completed. This is considered to be year 1 of the management plan. For those activities that can be undertaken at any time of year, the earliest possible time is recommended.

5.12 Management Responsibilities

Crest Nicholson Operations Limited will assume responsibility for the management and maintenance of the newly created and enhanced habitats. When required, responsibility will include ensuring all management works are completed and qualified ecologists, arborists or landscape managers are

contracted, etc. If the land is to be transferred, the new landlords shall bear responsibility for the management and maintenance of habitats within their curtilage. If not, the responsibility shall remain with Crest Nicholson Operations Limited. All management works as described above will need to be secured by a Section 106 agreement for the site that will legally oblige Crest Nicholson Operations Limited or other agreed party to carry out the works. An annual management timeline of all habitats has been provided in **Table 6** and management works should continue in perpetuity.

A formal review process will be implemented when objectives and management recommendations are not reached / roles and responsibilities are not fulfilled as agreed. The details of this formal review process are as below:

- A suitably qualified ecologist will visit the site to conduct the compliance check (detailed in **Section 5.9**;
- The compliance check will include the write up and submission of a BNG Habitat Monitoring report;
- The ecologist will review the success for BNG that the previous recommendations or management actions have for the target species / habitats;
- The project manager is contacted by the ecologist and is informed of the recommendations or management actions which have not been fulfilled to identify what or who is responsible;
- The BNG Habitat Monitoring report will include a section addressing any raised issues identified during the compliance check;
- The BNG Habitat Monitoring report is submitted to the LPA for review and comment.

Table 5. Schedule of habitat retention, enhancement and creation works to be carried out in first year (as per Sections 4.0 and 5.0).

General Activity	Specific Activity	Dates / Timing	Description
Habitat Retention (Section 5.1)	Installation of Heras fencing for protection	Anytime (Pre-commencement)	Heras fencing to be erected along the boundary of the site to protect adjacent woodland habitats and surrounding retained features (i.e. veteran trees and rush pasture parcel) to prevent damage to these habitats during works.
Habitat Creation/ Enhancement Modified Grassland (Sections 5.2)	Creation of grassland	Ideally Autumn or Spring	Establish the grassland through sowing of Emorsgate EM1 – General Purpose Meadow Mixture.
	Year 1 Management	Routinely as required	- Control annual weed growth by regular mowing throughout the first year to minimise competition and weed seed production. - If necessary, glyphosate-based weed killer can be used to spot treat any areas with dense patches of Nettles or Bramble.
Habitat Creation Other Neutral Grassland (Section 5.3)	Creation of grassland	Ideally Autumn or Spring	The areas scheduled to be created to form other neutral grassland will be sown with Emorsgate EM1F – Basic General Purpose Wild Flower Mix.
	Year 1 Management	Routinely as required	Control annual weed growth by mowing to 50-75mm throughout the first year to minimise competition and weed seed production.
Habitat Creation Individual Trees (Sections 5.4)	Planting	Late Autumn	- Plant native tree species. - Apply Rootgrow or Bonemeal to encourage healthy root growth. - Apply Mycorrhizal treatment to the tree roots.
	Year 1 Management	Routinely as required	- Remove weeds from a 1m exclusion zone around each newly planted tree. - Apply mulch around the base of the tree as required.

Habitat Translocation Rush Pasture (Section 5.5)	Preparing donor site	October – February	• 2-stage cut to 50-75mm above ground level. • Remove any arisings. • Excavate to a substantial depth of topsoil to include any rush roots and rhizomes.
	Planting	Ideally on day of excavation.	• Excavated soil to be collected as turves or loose soil depending on the ground conditions. • Planted surrounding the SUDs feature in the north and the Rush Pasture area in the south of the site. • Freshly translocated rush pasture should be rolled or gently tamped down.
	Year 1 Management	End of August and before March	• Cutting utilising a brush-cutter with a blade, just above ground level. • A patchwork of cutting should be implemented to encourage a varied sward height. • All cut material should be raked off and removed.
Habitat Creation SUDs (Sections 5.6)	Planting	Ideally Autumn or Spring	• The banks of the SuDs basin will be planted with the translocated rush pasture habitat. • The basin will be sown with Emorsgate EM8 Meadow Mixture for Wetlands. •
	Year 1 Management	Routinely as required	• Control annual weed growth by regular mowing throughout the first year to 30-50mm to minimise competition and weed seed production. • If necessary, glyphosate-based weed killer can be used to spot treat any areas with dense patches of Nettles or Bramble.
Habitat Creation Mixed Scrub	Plant native shrub species	Late Autumn	• Species to be planted are outlined in Section 5.7. At least 3 native species will be planted.

(Sections 5.7)	Removal of undesirable species	Anytime	Any undesirable species present within MS1 will be removed and replaced with native species.
	Year 1 Management	Spring and Summer	- Weed around newly planted shrubs as necessary. - Water whenever necessary during the first growing season. - Replace any dead shrubs like-for-like.
Habitat Creation/ Enhancement Hedgerow (Section 5.8)	Planting	Late Autumn	- Prepare ground by removing all weeds and digging a strip approx. 60-90cm wide. - Species to be planted are outlined in Section 5.8.
	Year 1 Management	Winter i.e. October - February (outside of bird nesting season)	- Begin 3 year cutting cycle in which a portion of the hedges on site are cut in the first year, another portion in the second year and no cutting in the third year. - Use hand tools and avoid the use of flails. - Sectional coppicing and/or hedge laying of western hedgerow to be undertaken where appropriate.
	Year 1 Monitoring	Late Winter – Early Spring	- Hedgerows will be inspected by a suitably experienced ecologist to assess the general health of the hedgerow. - Remedial action will be taken as necessary. - Any plants that are removed, die or become seriously damaged will be replaced like-for-like in the next planting season.

5.13 Years 2 – 30 Management / Monitoring Table

Once the initial works covering the first year of management / monitoring have been completed as outlined in **Table 5**, the longer-term management objectives for the ecological features on site will need to be implemented (which have been outlined in detail in the above sections). **Table 6** below provides an overview of the actions required and the timings of when they should be complete (covering years 2– 30 post construction).

Table 6. Schedule of monitoring and management in Years 2 – 30 for all habitats (as per Sections 4.0 and 5.0).

General Activity	Specific Activity	Dates / Timing	Description
Modified Grassland (Section 5.2)	Years 2-30 Management	Year-round	The grassland will be subject to regular mowing to a height of 30-50mm during April-August and 50-70mm for the remainder of the year. It is anticipated that grassland areas within the ANRG will be allowed to develop varied sward structures through rotational mowing regimes.
	Removal of undesirable species	Winter i.e. October - February (outside of bird nesting season)	Targeted scrub, bracken and invasive species removal will be carried out as necessary.
Other Neutral Grassland (Section 5.3)	Years 2 – 30 Management	Spring and mid to late Summer	- Mow to 100mm in Spring. - Leave to flower until late July / August. - Conduct single hay cut after flowering with growth reduced to 50mm. Manage sections of each grassland parcel at different times from late June to the end of August.
	Removal of undesirable species	Winter i.e. Mid-September - March	Targeted scrub, bracken and invasive species removal will be carried out as necessary.
Individual Trees (Section 5.4)	Weed management	Routinely as required	Remove weeds from a 1m area around the base of the trees for the first 2-3 years.
	Pruning	October	The trees will be subject to light pruning as required in October to ensure that they are developing healthy growth forms
	Monitoring	Every 3 years, late Winter – early Spring	- Trees will be inspected by a suitably experienced arborist. - General health will be assessed with remedial action recommended as necessary.

			- Arborist will produce a monitoring report to be sent to the LPA. - Any plants that are removed, die or become seriously damaged shall be replaced like-for-like in the next planting season.
Rush Pasture (Section 5.5)	Years 2 – 30 Management	End of August and before March	- Patches adjacent to those cut previously should be targeted. Aim is to treat all rush areas over a four-to-five-year cycle before returning to the first patches, which will create a structurally varied sward, with the shortest areas remaining at least 5 cm high by late autumn. - Cutting utilising a brush-cutter with a blade, just above ground level. - All arisings should be collected.
SUDs (Section 5.6)	Years 2 – 30 Management (Dry basin)	Spring and mid to late Summer	- Mow to 100mm in Spring. - Leave to flower until late July / August. - Conduct single hay cut after flowering with growth reduced to 30-50mm. - Further cuts to be implemented in autumn and spring as required (subject to access during wetter periods).
	Years 2 – 30 Management (Wet basin)	September - November	Vegetation managed in short sections every 2-3 years in rotation, with vegetation cut back/ selectively thinning in sections around the basin to create a varied structure.
	Removal of undesirable species	Winter i.e. Mid-September - March	Targeted scrub, bracken and invasive species removal will be carried out as necessary.
Mixed Scrub (Sections 5.7)	Cutting back / thinning	Winter i.e. October - February (outside of bird nesting season)	- Scrub will be cut back annually as needed to ensure areas do not become overgrown. - Thinning will take place routinely every 5 years.

			• Different areas will be cut back / thinned on rotation to maintain a diverse age range. • Any scrub encroaching into adjacent habitats will be cut back as needed.
	Bramble management	Winter i.e. October - February (outside of bird nesting season)	• Bramble will be cut back as necessary to maintain a density of no more than 15%.
	Invasive species removal	Winter i.e. October - February (outside of bird nesting season)	• Removal of invasive species will be undertaken as necessary if they establish on site.
	Shrub replacement	Late Autumn	• Any dead shrubs or areas that become sparse will be planted with new native shrubs, replacing like-for-like.
Hedgerow (Section 5.8)	Years 2-30 Management	Winter i.e. October - February (outside of bird nesting season)	• Continue the 3-year cutting cycle. • A proportion of hedges (at least 30%) should wherever possible be left to grow for 7-10 years. • Maintain a height of 3-4m wherever possible. • Use hand tools and avoid the use of flails. • Use coppicing or laying to fill gaps. • If hedgerow size needs to be reduced (e.g. in more formal areas), avoid cutting the top and cut only one side.
	Monitoring	Late Winter – Early Spring Annually in Years 1-3 Bi-annually in Years 4-10	• Suitably qualified ecologist will assess the health of the hedgerow and recommend any necessary remedial action
	Replacement Planting	Late Autumn ideally, in suitable weather (for planting)	• Removed, dead or damaged specimens will be replaced like for like in the next planting season.

		Winter i.e. October - February (outside of bird nesting season) (for coppicing / laying)	Coppicing / laying will be used to gap up / thicken any thin hedgerows.
Compliance Check (Section 5.9)	Monitoring report	Annually for the first 5 years, then every 5 years until year 30 Must be conducted during a suitable time of year and weather conditions	- A report will be produced detailing assessment of habitats against criteria stipulated in Section 3.0 and any necessary remedial actions or adjustments to ongoing management. - The report will be submitted to the LPA. - Any necessary actions must then be completed prior to the next compliance check.

6. CONCLUSION

The aim of this report is to provide a prescription of the management of habitats within the site for a period of at least 30 years, drawing together all relevant sections within the EclA (Ecosupport Ltd, 2026) for 'Land West of Gatesmead' to inform a site-wide Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan. In addition, the report outlines how the site will deliver a 10% net gain for biodiversity post-development and how this will be secured for the 30-year period. With the implementation of all recommendations within this report, the site is expected to deliver a net enhancement for biodiversity and ensure that the local conservation status of protected / notable species on site is preserved.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – BNG Baseline Habitats Map

Appendix B – BNG Post-Development Layout