



Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report

**Land at Hill House Farm Cottages, Handcross
Road, Staplefield, West Sussex, RH17 6EE**

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species maybe recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Victoria Hogg to undertake a Biodiversity Net-gain calculation for the proposed development at land to the south of Hill House Farm Cottages, Handcross Road, Staplefield, West Sussex, RH17 6EE, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.2 The site is situated between Hill House Farm and Hill House Farm Cottage between the villages of Handcross and Staplefield to the south of Crawley (TQ 27044 29126). The proposed track area is c.4m x 120m and consists of ruderal and ephemeral vegetation in the south and modified grassland in the north. It cuts through an existing field used for cattle grazing with Hill House Farm Cottage to the north and access will be through the concrete yard in Hill House Farm to the south. The wider surroundings are rural, dominated by pasture, and woodland. The red line boundary of the site is shown below in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Site red line boundary

- 1.3 An accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been prepared by The Ecology Partnership in support of the current planning application (The Ecology Partnership, 2025). This report should be read in conjunction with the PEA.

- 1.4 The proposed development involves an excavation to 400mm of the trackway within the field, placement of water permeable geotextile, 300mm of crushed hardcore, 100mm of type 1 MOT, and a thin layer of soil on top, and will be allowed to naturally revegetate. The existing concrete access through the farmyard is being retained.

2.0 DEFRA Metric Methodology

- 2.1 BNG principles are aimed to support both the aspired green infrastructural proposals set to define the created landscape and support biodiversity and habitat enhancement. BNG principles are set within the Environment Bill (2021).
- 2.2 In order to determine the on-site habitat baseline, habitats were identified in accordance with UK Hab 2.0, mapped and subject to a condition assessment on 6th June 2025. This work was undertaken by Principal Ecologist Matthew Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, an experienced botanist who holds a Level 4 Field Identifications Skills Certificate (FISC), which included condition assessments of each habitat on the 11th August 2025.
- 2.3 The Statutory Metric is used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial habitats within the application area, and supersedes version 4.0 of the Defra metric. This metric underpins the Environment Act's provisions for mandatory biodiversity net-gain in England and defines 'measurable' net-gains.
- 2.4 The Biodiversity Metric uses habitat as a proxy for wider biodiversity with different habitat types scoring different values according to their relative biodiversity value. These are dependent on the condition and location of the habitat, in order to calculate '**biodiversity units**'.
- 2.5 The site has been assessed in terms of the condition assessment of the baseline during both the August 2025 assessment by The Ecology Partnership, and through review of historic satellite and street-view imagery, following the standard metric guidelines.

3.0 DEFRA Metric Calculations

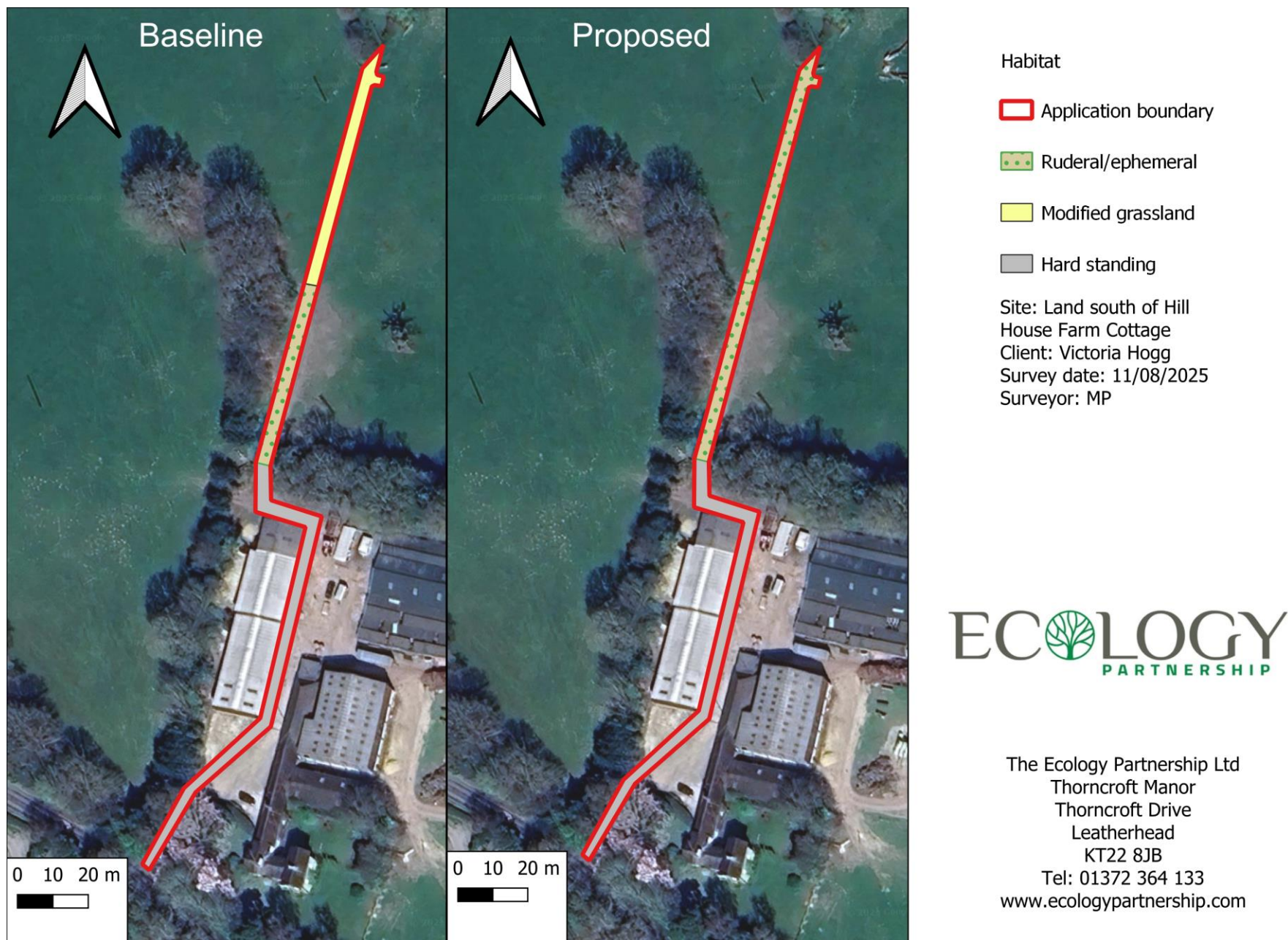
- 3.1 The habitats currently present on site have been divided into a number of habitat types. These are shown in Table 1 and 2 and Figure 2 overleaf.

Table 1. On-Site Habitat Baseline

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Total units	Area retained	Area enhanced	Units lost	Comments
Modified grassland	0.03	Low	Poor	Low	0.006	-	-	0.06	Cattle-grazed pasture
Ruderal/Ephemeral	0.02	Low	Poor	Low	0.004	-	-	0.04	Compacted area of hardcore, bare ground, and short ephemeral/perennial vegetation
Developed land; sealed surface	0.05	V.Low	N/A - Other	Low	0	0.05	-	0	
Total habitat area (ex. trees)	<u>0.1</u>	Totals			<u>0.01</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.1</u>	

Table 2. On-Site Habitat Creation

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Time to target condition (years)	Difficulty of creation	Total units	Comments
Created								
Ruderal/Ephemeral	0.05	Low	Poor	Low	1	Low	0.1	New unsealed trackway to be allowed to revegetate
Total habitat area	<u>0.05</u>	Totals					<u>0.1</u>	



- 3.2 The baseline habitats on site have been assessed as having a value of **0.1 habitat units**.
- 3.3 The proposed development involves an excavation to 400mm of the trackway placement of water permeable geotextile, 300mm of crushed hardcore, 100mm of type 1 MOT, and a thin layer of soil on top, and will be allowed to naturally revegetate. This will likely result in sparsely vegetated ephemeral and short perennial vegetation along the length of the track as is already present in the southern portion of the track location
- 3.4 The final results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Final results

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-3.50%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	0.10	0.11	0.01
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

- 3.5 The calculations confirm that the development has the potential to result in a net-loss of 0.0135 habitat units (-3.5%).
- 3.6 In order to achieve a net-gain of +10% and satisfy the trading summary, an additional **0.0135 units** of offsite habitat units will need to be purchased from an off-site provider.

Offsite providers at the nearest three habitat banks should therefore be approached for quotes and to confirm they have capability to offset the deficit requirement. Once planning has been granted these units will be purchased directly from one of these providers and the final Biodiversity Gain Report and updated metric will be submitted to the LPA to close off the relevant condition

Appendix 1: Condition Assessments

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)		
UKHab Habitat Type(s): Grassland - Modified grassland		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Modified grassland
1	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	Fail (3.2 over 5 quadrats)
2	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Fail
3	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90% cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Pass
4	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Fail
5	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens?).	Pass
6	Cover of bracken is less than 20%.	Pass
7	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species? (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA*).	Pass
Condition		Poor
Condition Assessment Result		
Good	Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including essential criterion 1	
Moderate	Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion 1	
Poor	Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR 4-6 of criteria but failing criterion 1	

Condition Sheet: URBAN - NON PRIORITY Habitat Type		
UKHab Habitat Type(s): Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/ephemeral and Tall forbs; Urban – Allotments/Bioswale/Cemeteries and churchyards/Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land(OMH)/Rain garden/SUDs/bare ground/all green walls and roofs		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Ruderal/ephemeral
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Fail
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Fail
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ¹) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) ² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area ³ . Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Pass
Condition		Poor
Condition Assessment Result		
Good	Passes 3 of 3 core criteria; AND Meets the requirements for good condition within criteria 2 and 3	
Moderate	Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for good condition within criteria 2 and 3	
Poor	Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria	
Footnote 1 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Footnote 2 – Sources of information about detrimental non-native species can be found on the GB Non-native Species Secretariat (GBNNSS) website: Home » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org) And Natural England Access to Evidence page should also be checked for up-to-date information: Horizon-scanning for invasive non-native plants in Great Britain - NECR053 (naturalengland.org.uk) For criterion C – For green roof habitat types only – buddleia <i>Buddleja davidii</i> should be assessed alongside Schedule 9 species. This species impairs the health of the local ecosystem and reduces the biodiversity potential of the roof. It is also a sign that a roof has not been planted and seeded correctly in subsequent years. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Use professional judgement. Sources of information about non-native species that are not detrimental to native wildlife can be found on the GBNNSS website: Alternative plants » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org)		

Appendix 2: Grassland quadrat data

Common Name	Latin Name	Quadrat					DAFOR
		1	2	3	4	5	
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	D
Greater plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	✓					O
Shepherd's purse	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	✓					R
Even-leaved knotgrass	<i>Polygonum suppressum</i>	✓					O
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium repens</i>		✓	✓			F
Annual meadowgrass	<i>Poa annua</i>			✓	✓		F
Pineappleweed	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>						R
Scentless mayweed	<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>						R
Marsh cudweed	<i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>						R
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>						R
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>						R
Species richness:		4	3	4	3	2	
Mean species richness:		3.2					

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