



Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

The Land North of Ethlinden, Hophurst Hill
Crawley Down, RH10 4LP

On Behalf of:
GRIP Holdings Ltd

December 2025

Introduction

Coyne Environmental Ltd were commissioned by GRIP Holdings Ltd to prepare an Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (BES) for the land north of Ethlinden, Hophurst Hill, Crawley Down, RH10 4LP (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TQ 35651 38942). The purpose of this BES is to set out appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures, including habitat creation, installation of bird & bat boxes, hibernation huts, and long term management prescriptions to support ecological value at the site. The document provides the necessary ecological information to support the discharge of planning **condition 4** under planning consent Application No: DM/25/0245 Mid Sussex District Council. This Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy focuses specifically on recommended enhancements and their implementation.

Condition 4 states:

Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected and Priority or threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;*
- b) Detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*
- c) Locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);*
- d) Persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and*
- e) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant)*

"The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter."

Reason: To enhance protected and Priority species and habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under para 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

The proposed development involves a change of use of part of the site to equestrian land, including the creation of a horse paddock and associated infrastructure such as fencing, a timber access gate and a gravel driveway connecting to the existing right of way. The paddock will be formed within an area of previously disturbed ground that is currently sparsely vegetated or bare, while the surrounding birch woodland will be retained. Landscape and boundary features, including the existing earth bund around the paddock, will remain in place and help integrate the paddock into the wider rural setting. The proposals provide an opportunity to manage the land in a more structured manner, maintaining openness while safeguarding the ecological value of the surrounding woodland and adjacent habitats.

The site is located to the north end of Hophurst Hill, a rural lane, and is bordered by birch dominated woodland to the north, with a detached dwelling to the south and a fishing pond located to the north-west. The application area includes a previously disturbed circular section of land that has been subject to historic groundworks, resulting in a predominance of sparsely vegetated and bare ground habitats. Surrounding the disturbed area is an earth bund approximately 1m in height and width, with scattered ruderal and ephemeral vegetation establishing across parts of the site.

Vegetation within the sparsely vegetated areas is characterised by early successional species typical of disturbed substrates, including horseweed *Erigeron canadensis*, thistles *Cirsium* spp., feverfew *Tanacetum parthenium* and lawn daisy *Bellis perennis*, with patches of bent grass *Agrostis* spp. and rough meadow grasses *Poa* spp. occurring locally. Areas of clay-rich soil retain surface water following rainfall, supporting small patches of moisture-tolerant species such as water starwort *Callitriche* spp. Overall, the site currently supports habitats of low ecological value, though it remains functionally connected to the surrounding woodland and wider rural landscape.

Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP)

In the interest of fulfilling each section (a) – (e) of **Condition 4**. Each section of the BES will be labelled in relation to the section it covers.

a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;

An Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy sets out targeted measures to improve the ecological condition of a development site following construction. Its primary purpose is to ensure biodiversity gains and create opportunities for wildlife to utilise the site more effectively than at present. In addition to habitat creation, the BES outlines practical on-site measures and sensitive working approaches designed to minimise ecological impacts during the works phase. Enhancements incorporated into the final landscape design are intended not only to raise the ecological quality of the site but also to increase its suitability for a range of species, supporting long term biodiversity objectives.

It is proposed to undertake the following:

- Details and installation of bird boxes
- Details and installation of bat boxes (European Protected Species)
- Details and installation of hedgehog home/connectivity (Priority Species)
- Details and installation of insect hotels

b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;

Bird Boxes

Given the small scale of the site, a total of **3 bird nesting boxes** is recommended to provide immediate nesting and roosting opportunities for locally occurring species. A simple two type provision will adequately support both cavity nesting and open front species within the emerging habitat structure:

- **3 × RSPB Classic nest boxes (Figure 1a)**
Suitable for species like the great tit (*Parus major*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*).

These should be installed on mature trees or newly established planting corridors between 2–4m in height, with clear flight access and sheltered aspects where possible. The recommended orientation for the bird boxes is northerly to easterly to avoid overheating. Any bird feeders should only be filled in winter with approved wild bird seeds and away from cat/grey squirrel predation. A water container for birds to drink/bathe should be placed in an open location. This provision will enhance nesting opportunities during habitat establishment.

and contribute toward measurable biodiversity uplift associated with condition driven enhancements.



Figure 1: (a) RSPB Classic nest boxes

Bat Boxes

A total of 2 National Trust Arundel bat boxes (Figure 2) should be fit to the boundary trees, in sheltered locations, away from direct sunlight to manufacturer's instructions. Clear pathways are required, and any outside lighting should not be directed to these locations and at least 3m away. Lighting triggered by movement should also be avoided, any bats foraging near the site would be disturbed and this may affect their feeding habits. Entrances to the bat boxes should be protected from strong winds and the preferred orientation is south-west facing entrances, and north facing boxes are additionally suitable for hibernation purposes.



Figure 2: National Trust Arundel Bat Box

Hedgehogs

The site does not include hedgerows or close boarded fencing; however, boundary features associated with the proposed paddock, including post-and-rail fencing and informal vegetated margins, will remain permeable at ground level and will not present a barrier to hedgehog movement. Where fencing is installed, gaps will be retained at ground level to allow small mammals to pass freely through the site.

To provide a precautionary enhancement, a minimum of **one hedgehog hibernation shelter** is recommended to be installed discreetly along the paddock boundary, positioned within existing boundary vegetation or scrub where disturbance is minimal. The shelter entrance should remain clear of obstructions and be oriented away from prevailing winds. This measure will provide resting and overwintering opportunities for hedgehogs moving through the wider landscape, without restricting access or movement across the site.



Figure 3: Example Woodside hibernation shelter



Insects

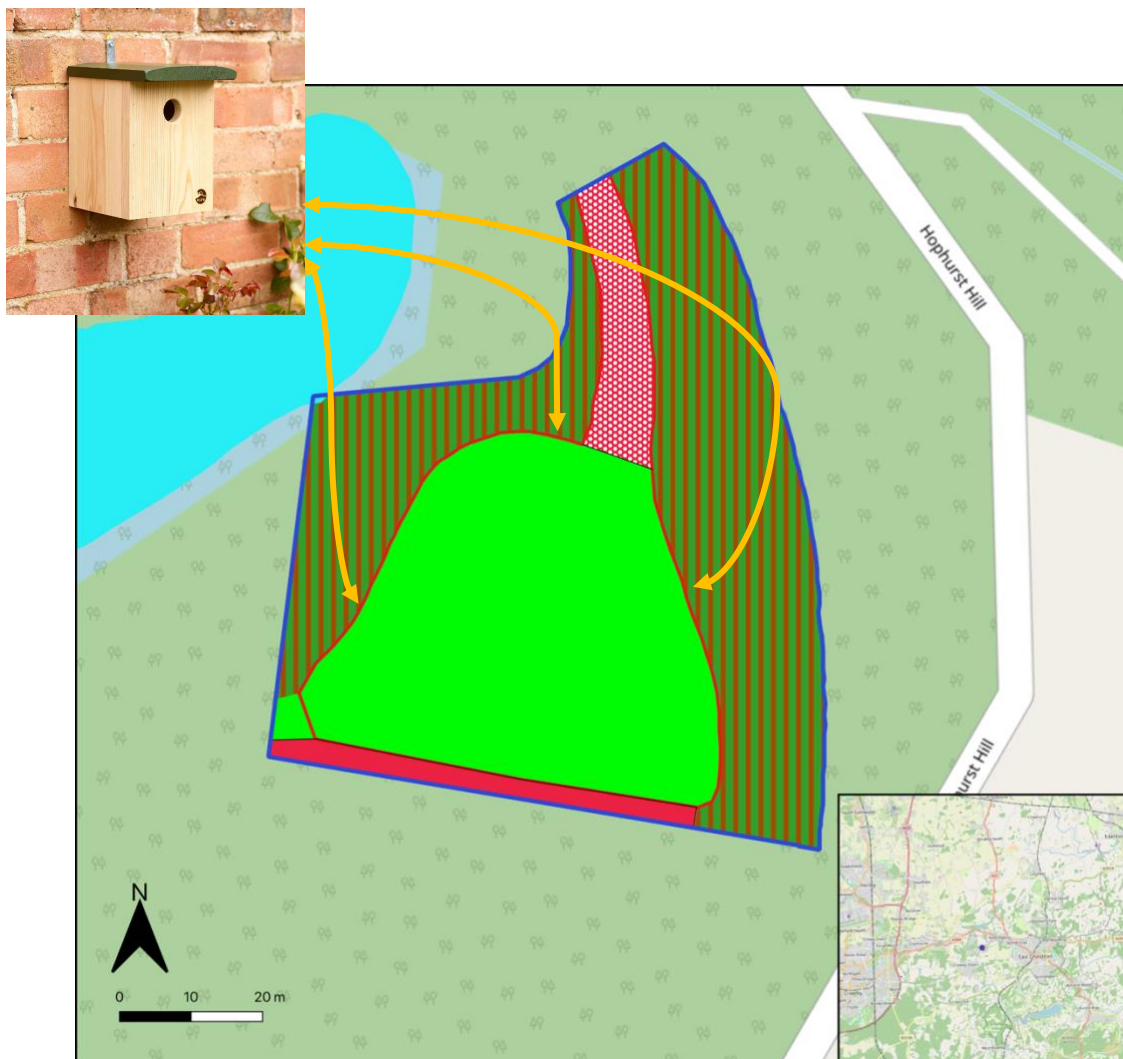
To enhance invertebrate biodiversity within the site, the installation of insect hotels is recommended. These features can be positioned either at ground level within undisturbed areas of the paddock boundary or securely mounted on retained trees or posts, ensuring they are located in sheltered, sunny positions away from regular disturbance. Insect hotels will provide valuable nesting and overwintering opportunities for a range of invertebrates, including solitary bees (e.g. *Osmia* spp.), ladybirds (*Coccinellidae*), lacewings (*Chrysopidae*) and ground beetles (*Carabidae*). The inclusion of these structures will support pollination, natural pest control and overall ecosystem function, contributing positively to local biodiversity within the site.

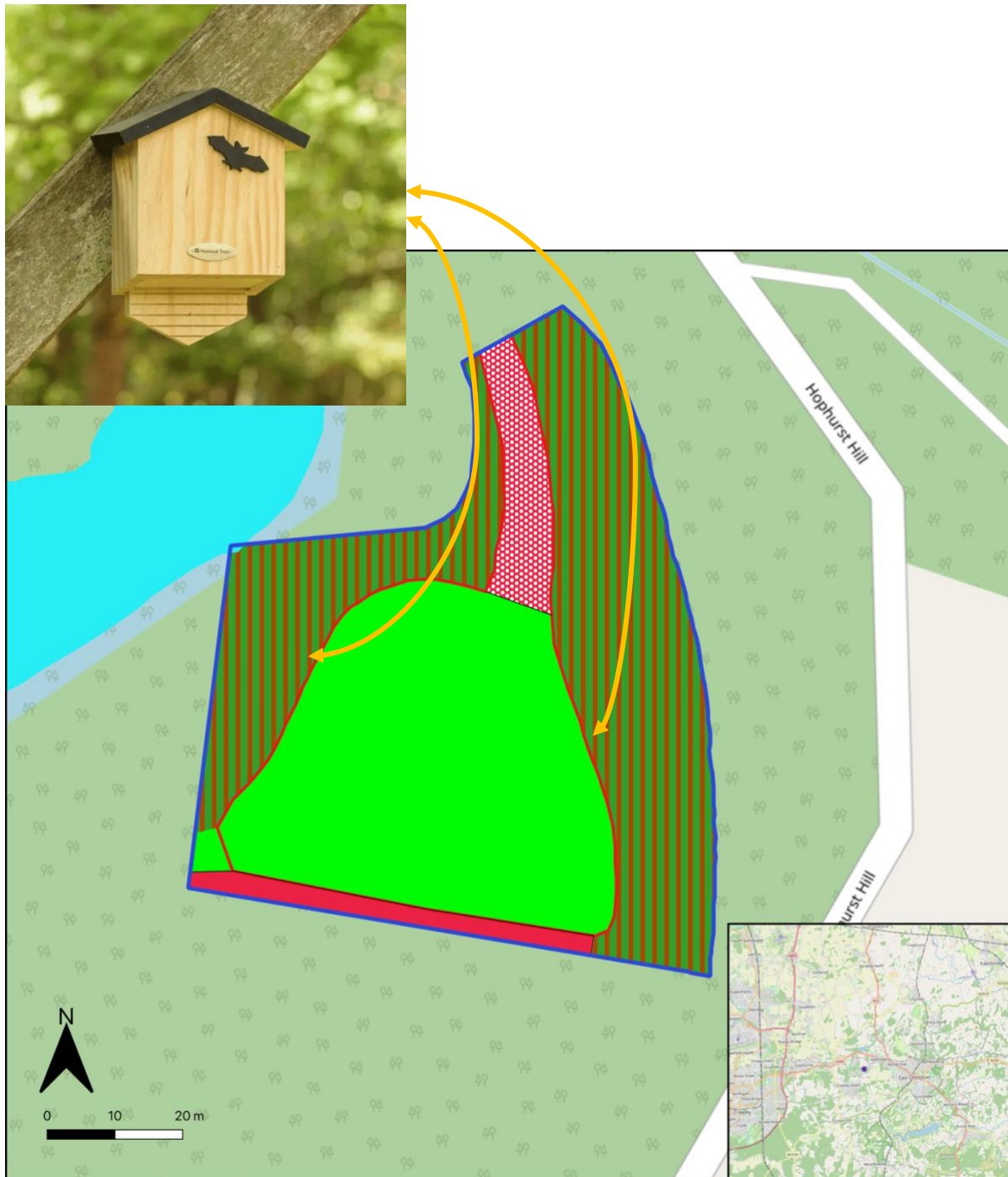
I recommend a **total of 2 Insect hotels** be placed on site.

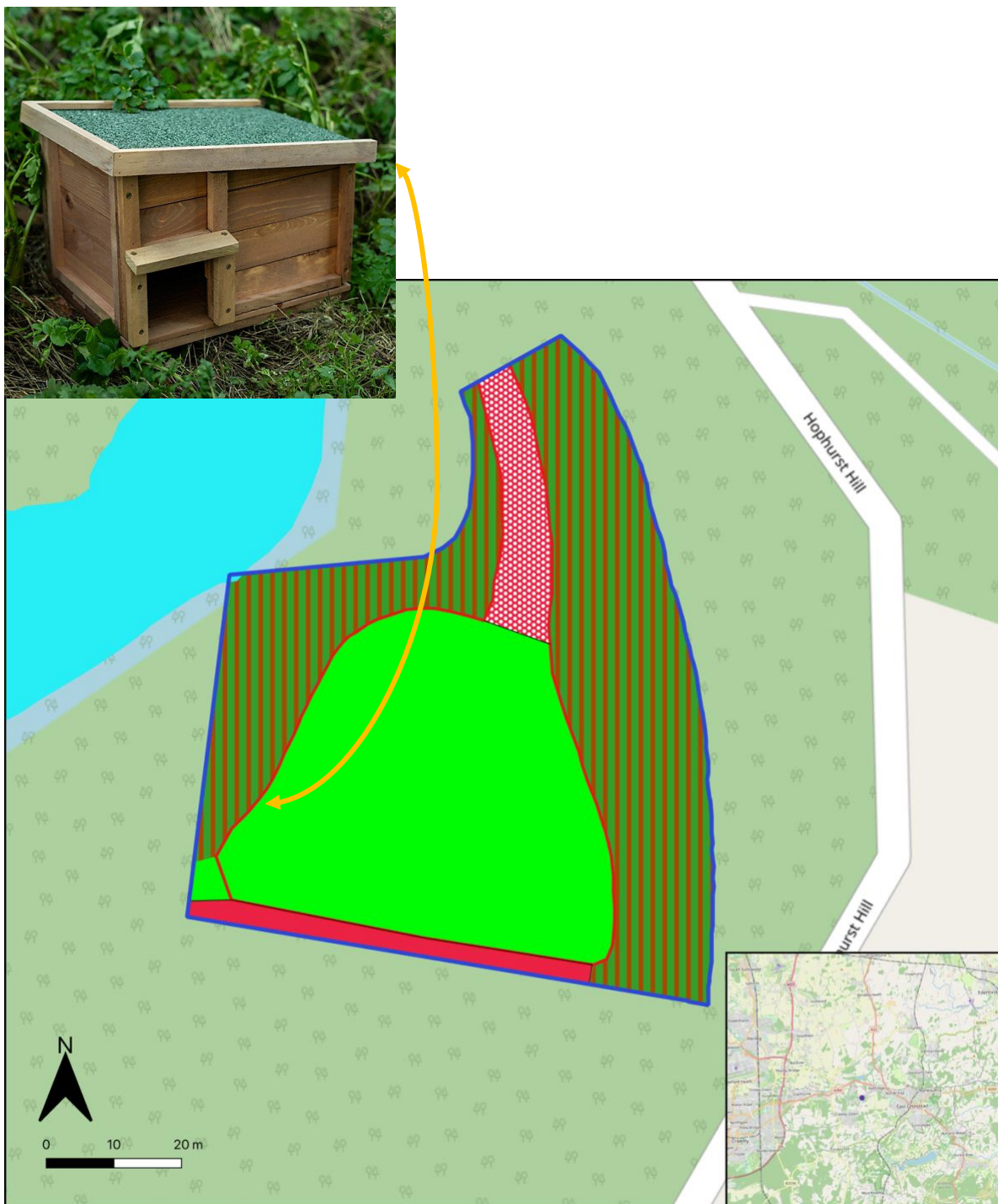


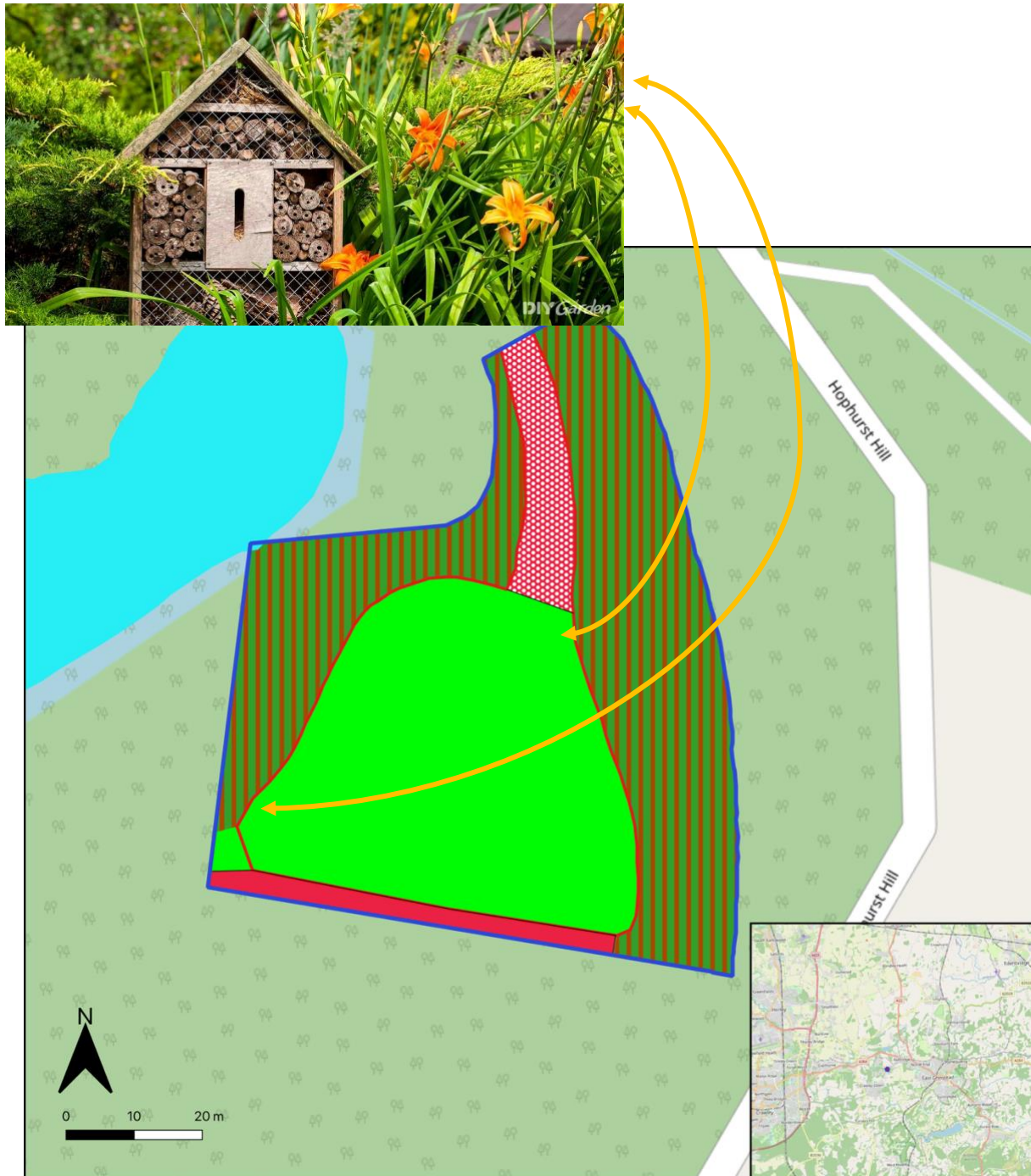
Figure 4: Woodside Wooden Insect Hotels & Bee House

c) Locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);









To conclude section (c), it is recommended that the proposed bird boxes are installed along the site boundaries, fixed to suitable mature trees around the perimeter of the paddock. Placement should be flexible and informed by on site conditions at the time of installation, but boxes should be located away from areas of regular disturbance, particularly the gravel access drive, to maximise their suitability for nesting birds. Bat boxes may similarly be installed on boundary trees and should be distributed evenly around the site to provide a range of roosting opportunities while minimising disturbance from vehicle movements and lighting. Insect hotels may be positioned either at ground level or mounted on trees within quieter boundary areas of the paddock, where they will benefit from shelter and varied microhabitats. Hedgehog hibernation shelters should be located discreetly along the paddock boundaries, particularly within areas offering natural cover such as scrub, bunds or woodland edges, where they will benefit from minimal human disturbance. The locations

shown on the plan are indicative, and alternative positions may be selected provided the overall intent of even distribution, low disturbance and habitat connectivity is maintained.

*d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and
e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).*

Management

Bird nesting boxes should be inspected annually outside of the breeding season, preferably in September or October. Where boxes show evidence of use, old nesting material should be carefully removed to maintain suitability for future breeding seasons. Bat boxes should not be opened or disturbed at any time, in accordance with best practice guidance, and should be left to weather naturally. Hedgehog hibernation shelters should also remain undisturbed once installed, with access points kept clear of obstruction to ensure continued use.

Any works undertaken near enhancement features should be timed to avoid the bird breeding season (March–August inclusive), unless a suitably qualified ecologist confirms that nesting birds are absent. Routine site management activities should avoid damage or disturbance to installed boxes and shelters, particularly along the paddock boundaries where wildlife features are concentrated. These measures will ensure the long term functionality of the ecological enhancements and maintain their value for local wildlife.

Conclusion

Coyne Environmental Ltd was commissioned to prepare an Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy in support of Condition 4 of the planning application for the land north of Ethlinden, Hophurst Hill, Crawley Down. This BES has now been completed and provides a targeted framework of habitat creation, biodiversity enhancements and species supporting features that will contribute to measurable ecological improvement across the site.

The proposed change of use to equestrian land, alongside the introduction of targeted ecological enhancements, will deliver a measurable improvement in habitat diversity and ecological function across the site. The installation of bird nesting boxes, bat roost features, insect hotels and hedgehog hibernation shelters around the paddock boundaries will increase opportunities for nesting, roosting, foraging and refuge within an area that is currently of limited biodiversity value. Collectively, these measures will enhance habitat connectivity with the surrounding woodland landscape and support a range of common and priority species, contributing positively to local biodiversity objectives while remaining compatible with the ongoing equestrian use of the land.

Based on survey findings and the proposed enhancements, I conclude that the development will not result in any significant adverse ecological effects and offers clear opportunities for biodiversity net gain once planting has established. No further ecological survey work is considered necessary at this stage, and the application can be determined by the Local Planning Authority on this basis.

References:

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (c. 69), available at:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

Environmental Act 2021 (c. 30), available at:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

Supporting Statement Mid Sussex District Council

Coyne Environmental PEA