



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

**Land at Bird in Eye Farm,
Uckfield**

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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 Proposed Development covers a total of approximately 20.12ha. This is made up of modified grassland, boundary hedgerows, central tree lines and hedgerows, and an area of lowland deciduous woodland. For full habitat descriptions see The Ecology Partnership PEA and condition assessment survey (2024).

1.2 The extent of the Site is shown in Figure 1 below, the survey area is shown in Figure 2.

1.3 Biodiversity enhancements, which would help support both on Site BNG requirements and NRN aspirations could include the development of the following ambitions;

- Nurturing and enhancing on site biodiversity;
- Restoring on site habitats including declining habitats;
- Increase of biodiversity value through natural flood defence incorporating features such as SUDSs, reed beds and ponds;
- Providing a landscape level approach to habitat creation.



Figure 1: Site Boundary



Figure 2: Site Boundary (taken from Google Earth Pro October 2023)

1.4 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) principles are aimed to support both the aspired green infrastructural proposals set to define the created landscape and support biodiversity and habitat enhancement. The requirement BNG principles are set within the Environment Bill (2021).

2.0 Methodology

2.1 In order to undertake the BNG assessment, a PEA (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal) and a condition assessment (an assessment of the quality of the habitats present) were undertaken in June 2024.

2.2 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric is used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains. This metric underpins the Environment Bill's provisions for mandatory biodiversity net gain in England. The Biodiversity Metric uses habitat as a proxy for wider biodiversity with different habitat types scoring different values according to their relative biodiversity value and dependent on the condition and location of the habitat, to calculate '**biodiversity units**'.

2.3 To inform the BNG assessment, the site was surveyed following the standard metric guidelines. The habitats were each assessed using the ‘condition assessments’ as provided in the accompanying DEFRA Metric 4.0 (Ref Natural England Joint Publication JP039 SIBN 978-1-7393362-2-6 March 2023) and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology February 2024. For example, all grassland habitats were reviewed in terms of species composition per m² and as a whole (across the whole of the field network).

2.4 The Site has been assessed in terms of the condition assessment of the habitat baseline. This process was undertaken during the PEA survey and therefore this report should be read in conjunction with the associated PEA (The Ecology Partnership, 2024).

3.0 Assessment

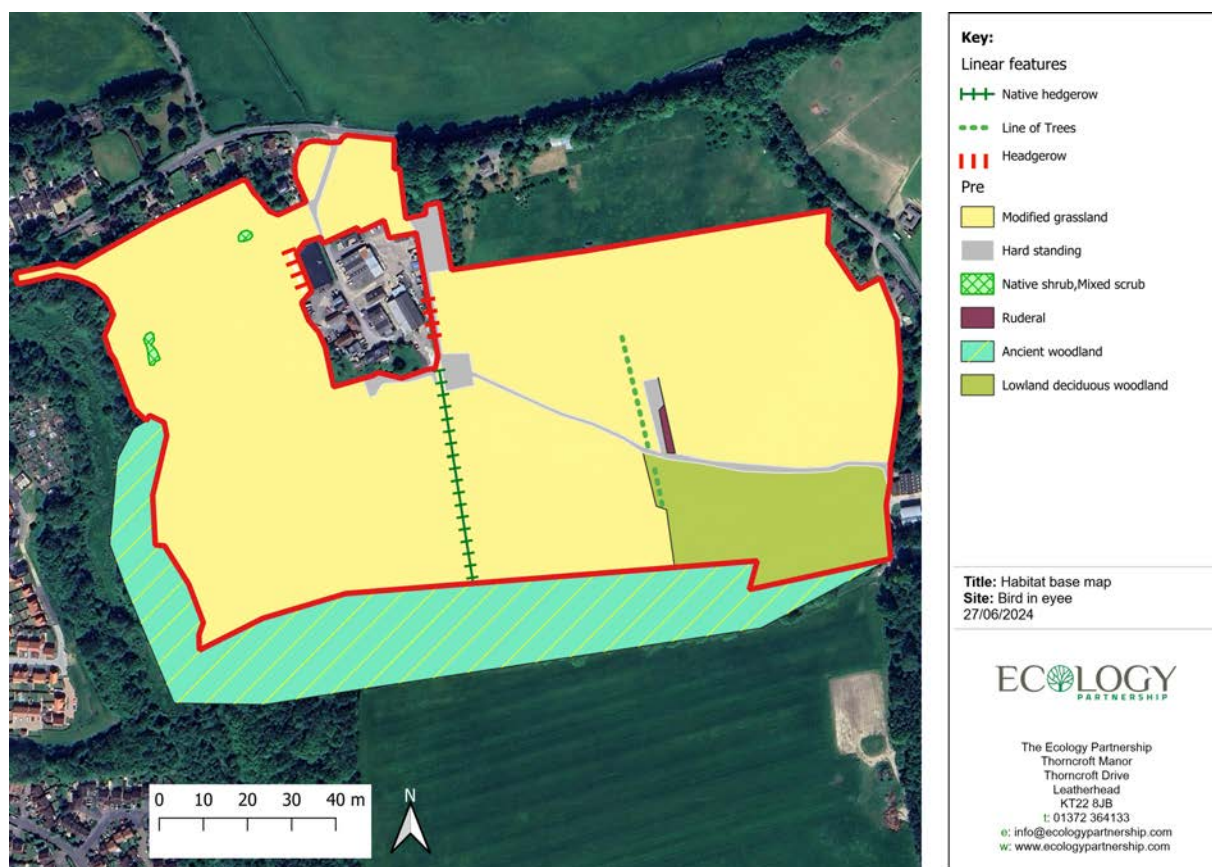
3.1 The pre development habitats are broken shown in Table 1 and 2 and Figure 3 below.

Table 1: Site Habitat Baseline

Habitat type	Area (ha)	Description
Modified grassland (moderate)	4.28	‘Moderate’ condition
Modified grassland	14.11	‘Poor’ condition
Lowland deciduous woodland	1.03	‘Poor’ condition
Hardstanding	0.6397	Condition is set as N/A
Mixed scrub	0.0307	‘Poor’ condition
Ruderals	0.0267	‘Poor’ condition
Total	20.12	

Table 2: Linear Habitat Baseline

Habitat type	Km	Condition
Tree line TL1	0.16	'Moderate' Condition.
Tree line TL2	Retained	Outside red line boundary
Central hedgerow H1	0.22	'Good' Condition.
Northern hedgerow H2	Retained	Outside red line boundary
Total	0.38	

*Figure 3: Habitat baseline (excluding ditch riparian zone)*

3.2 The post development habitats are shown in two areas, the development area and the 15m ancient woodland area, and the SANGS area.

Table 4: Site Habitat Creation SANGS

Habitat type	Area (ha)	Condition
Retains woodland (lowland deciduous woodland)	1.03	Woodland uplifted from poor to moderate condition by thinning and creation of glades 'moderate' condition
SUDS basins	1.1972	Wetland grassland sown in SUDS basin for species rich planting 'moderate' condition
Modified grassland / managed areas in SANGS	1.04	More managed grassland likely to result in modified grassland 'moderate' condition
Other neutral grassland (Long grass species rich)	3.53	Habitat used to grassland within the Site as part of the open space provision – more wild, managed with light touch 'moderate' condition
Mixed scrub	0.87	Species rich mixed scrub planting 'Moderate' condition
Pond	0.04	Ponds created for interest for dogs and human interest 'poor' condition
Wildflower grassland	1.65	Species rich grassland. Managed as meadow grassland 'Moderate' condition
Rural tree	0.1629	40 small rural trees 'moderate' condition
Total	8.69 (without trees)	

3.3 The headline results are shown in figure 4 below for the SANGS area creation.

Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Habitat units	34.53
		Hedgerow units	0.00
		Watercourse units	0.00
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions		Habitat units	0.00
		Hedgerow units	0.00
		Watercourse units	0.00

FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Habitat units	34.53
		Hedgerow units	0.00
		Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Habitat units	159.11%
		Hedgerow units	0.00%
		Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?		Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	21.70	23.87	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Figure 4: Headline results.

- 3.4 The proposed planting within the Site and habitat enhancements will result in a **+159.11%** net gain in habitat units.
- 3.5 The development area included the housing and the open space provision and, included within this area is the 15m ancient woodland buffer zone, which has been excluded from the SANGS area, as this is not accessible for recreation.

Table 5: Site Habitat Creation DEVELOPMENT AREA

Habitat type	Area (ha)	Condition
Developed land sealed surface Buildings	2.744	'N/A' other
Vegetated gardens	1.176	Condition Assessment 'N/A'
SuDS basin / Other neutral grassland	0.07	SUDS basin with neutral grassland managed for wildlife interest 'moderate' condition
Urban / roads / cycle path / LEAP etc	2.37	'N/A' other
Modified grassland	3.09	Managed grassland in front of the listed building. Species rich and well maintained 'Good' condition
Mixed scrub	1.29	Species rich mixed scrub planting along the ancient woodland edge. Species rich and managed under LEMP. 'Good' condition
Traditional Orchard	0.11	Native fruit trees. Species rich grassland. Managed as meadow grassland 'Moderate' condition
Meadow grassland / other neutral	0.58	Species rich grassland. Managed as meadow grassland 'Moderate' condition
Urban tree	0.2443	60 small urban trees within the built environment and in open space provision 'moderate' condition
Total	11.43 (without trees)	

Table 6: Linear Habitat Baseline

Habitat type	Km	Condition
Tree line TL1	0.16	'Moderate' Condition. Retained
Tree line TL2	Retained	Outside red line boundary
Central hedgerow H1	0.22	'Good' Condition.

		Retained
Northern hedgerow H2	Retained	Outside red line boundary
New species rich hedgerow with trees	0.14	Planted around the farm yard and separates the farm yard from the housing development. 'Moderate' Condition.
Total	0.52	

3.6 The headline results are shown in figure 5 below for the DEVELOPMENT area creation.

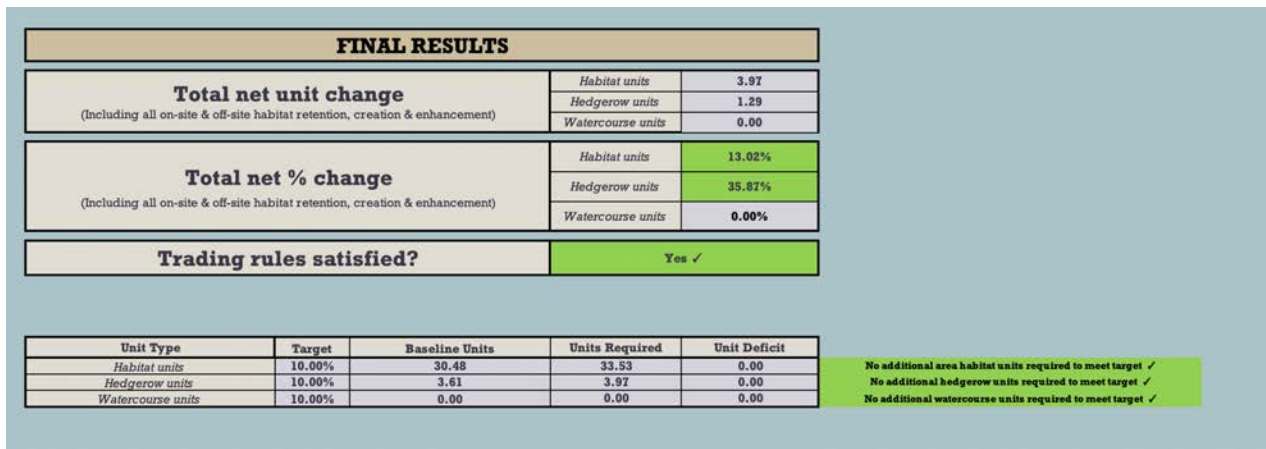


Figure 5: Headline results for the development area

3.7 The proposed planting within the Site and habitat enhancements will result in a **+13.02%** net gain in habitat units and a **+35.87%** net gain in linear features.

4.0 Enhancements

Gardens

4.1 Initial planting of the vegetated garden areas can be carried out with wildlife in mind. Native trees and shrubs should be planted where possible and wildflower seed mixes can be sown to enhance the grassland.

Integrated bat features

4.2 It is recommended that integrated bat tubes be incorporated into the structure of the new buildings, to provide new roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling species.

- 4.3 Examples of integrated roosts which can be incorporated into certain buildings such as a soffit bat box (Figure 6). This caters for crevice-dwelling species such as pipistrelles and certain *Myotis* species. This type of box makes use of an underutilised area of a building and would require no maintenance as droppings would drop through the entrance hole. These should be located on buildings close to linear features and dark corridors and if installed on private buildings, the owners should be made aware of their purpose and legal protection.

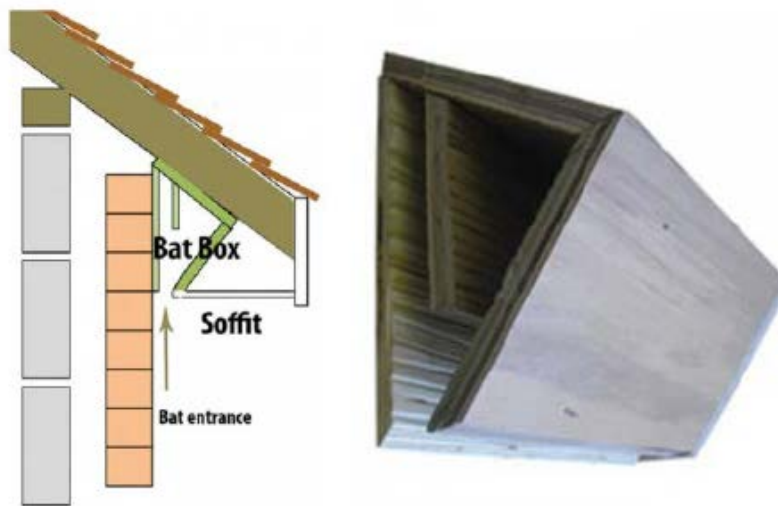


Figure 6: Soffit bat box (Wildcare)

Log Piles

- 4.4 Log piles should be created on Site, especially in the newly created wildflower meadow, in order to provide further habitats for a wide range of invertebrates, which in turn provides a food source for larger fauna, and hence increasing the biodiversity of the Site. Log piles should be made from native, broadleaved trees, and should be partially buried (Figure 7). They should be located within shady areas of the Site and along the SuDS and ditch network.

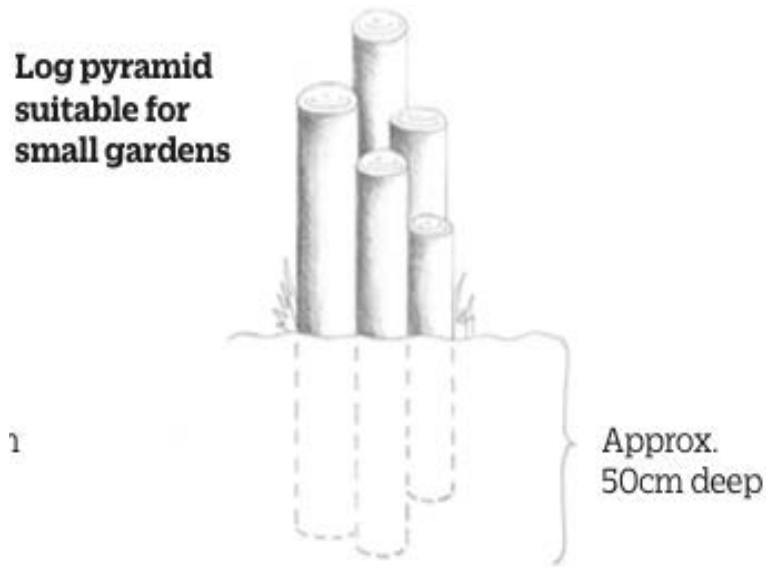


Figure 7: Example of a log pile to be built on Site

Bird Boxes

- 4.5 Additional nesting opportunities can be installed within existing trees on Site, or new buildings including garage areas. Again, hardwearing woodcrete boxes, or similar, are recommended. Figure 8 below gives examples of suitable bird boxes which could be installed onto the brickwork of the units or into the trees. The box should be positioned on a north or east facing aspect and at least 2m above the ground if possible. These would cater for species such as house sparrows and wagtails and the smaller garden birds.



Figure 8: Examples of suitable bird boxes which could be installed on site – Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box (left), Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Box (centre) and Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box (right)

Hedgehog Highways

- 4.6 All adjoining garden fences on Site will have a 13cm x 13cm hole at the bottom to provide a passageway for hedgehogs to travel between gardens and other habitats on site. Fences and walls are one of the main reasons why hedgehog numbers are declining as the amount of land available to them is reduced. To ensure that new residents do not block these 'highways', small signs can be erected above the hole, such as those produced by the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), informing them of their purpose (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Hedgehog highway sign for fences (hedgehogstreet.org)

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The baseline condition of habitats on Site is considered to be a mixture of high and low value habitats, notably species poor grassland, with the hedgerows and woodland being of higher value.
- 5.2 Under the proposed scheme a result in a a **+159.11%** net gain in habitat units within the SANGS area and in a **+13.02%** net gain in habitat units and a **+35.87%** net gain in linear features in the development area.
- 5.3 Additional enhancements which are not recognised within the Defra metric have been included within this report. These will ensure that the proposed scheme achieves an enhanced value for biodiversity post-development, creating opportunities for wildlife on Site and within the wider area.

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