



ecosupport

K4 Keppel
Daedalus Park
Daedalus Drive
Lee on the Solent
PO13 9FX

12th February 2025

RE: Westergate WTW, Level Mare Lane, Biodiversity Enhancement Statement

This statement outlines the measures to be implemented for the application in order to protect and improve the existing habitats in order to enhance the biodiversity of the site (this including both the redline and blueline). Mitigation and enhancements were not possible within the redline since the majority of the habitats here were hard-standing and the remainder was other neutral grassland, which will be lost for the creation of the new building. The proposed building will be unsuitable for integrated bat bricks and bird boxes.

Site Information

The site is comprised of tarmac, hard standing and a small section of other neutral grassland located at Westergate WTW, Level Mare Lane, Aldingbourne, PO20 3SA (centred on OS grid reference SU 93993 06886) (**Fig 1**). The offsite, blueline boundary is within client ownership and contains lowland mixed deciduous woodland, individual trees, two lines of trees, Bramble scrub, other neutral grassland, hard standing, a couple of buildings and two ponds. To the north and north-west of the site, ancient deciduous woodland is present. Ancient woodland is present to the north-east and traditional orchard to the south-east of the site. Farmland fields are located to the south of the site and sparse housing to the west and south-east, alongside fields. The immediate surrounding environment is largely rural.

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Figure 1. Redline (planning application and area of impact) and blueline boundary of the site (Google Satellite 2025).



Methodology

A walkover and field survey of the site was conducted by Shannon Dagnell Mbiol, Assistant ecologist on the 13th January 2025. Habitats on site pre-development were identified in accordance with the categories specified for a UK Habitats survey, using Habitat Definitions Version 2.01 (UKHab Ltd., 2023).

The methodology for the assessment of the likely ecological effects of the proposed development is based on CIEEM's *Guidelines for Ecological Assessment in the UK* (CIEEM 2018). Although this assessment does not constitute a formal Ecological/ Environmental Impact Assessment, the CIEEM guidelines provide a useful framework for assessing ecological impacts at any level.

Vegetation Survey Results

The habitats present onsite were:

- Developed land, sealed surface (u1b) – road (800)
- Other neutral grassland (g3c)

The habitats present within the blueline boundary were:

- Other neutral grassland (g3c)
- Bramble scrub (h3d)
- Wetland (f)
- Pond (r1)
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (w1f)
- Line of trees (w1g6)
- Individual trees
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)

Protection of habitats within the blueline

Barrier fencing will be installed around the redline boundary and no vehicles, nor machinery will go past the protective fencing, nor will materials be stored outside of it. Therefore, only habitats to be impacted will be used for storage. This fencing will be installed prior to any construction on the site and will remain in place until all work has been completed. As a result, all habitats within the blueline boundary will be protected from disturbance.

Furthermore, all vehicles will remain on the road onsite at all times and will maintain a distance of 10m from nearby trees, where possible. This will protect the individual trees and those within the treelines offsite from being disturbed.

A management plan has been created by Portsmouth Water (Portsmouth Water (2024) Westergate WTW Management), alongside Ecosupport's management recommendations to ensure the habitats onsite are maintained beneficially (Ecosupport (2025) Westergate_WTW_Preliminary_Ecological_Appraisal_FINAL_1).

Ponds

No waste or materials will be disposed of into any of the waterbodies, including the ditch, within the blueline, maintaining its condition. A management strategy has been outlined within the PEA report (Ecosupport (2025) Westergate_WTW_Preliminary_Ecological_Appraisal_FINAL_1) in order to protect and enhance the ponds and ditches within the blueline. Blanket weed should be removed carefully and dominating plants must be thinned, although ensuring a maximum of one third of a pond is cleared per year. Cleared vegetation must be left around the ponds for a few days, allowing wildlife time to return to the water, and then cleared to prevent nutrient build up and thereby preserve the soil condition for optimal species growth.

Dense emergent vegetation must not exceed 30% of the pond cover and if so, this will be removed between September and October using hand tools. Dense nettle patches can be treated with glyphosate-based weed killer. If native vegetation surrounding the pond is lost, the following species can be planted to replace them; Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus*

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sylvestris), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) and Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). In order to maintain full functionality of the ponds, the middle of the pond should be kept at a depth between 30cm and 100cm, surrounding this a depth of 10cm to 30cm for tall marginal plants to thrive and the exterior to have a depth between up to 10cm, allowing wetland herbs and submerged grasses to grow successfully.

Portsmouth Water's management plan (Portsmouth Water (2024) Westergate WTW Management) outlines that 25% of tall sedges will be cut back from around the central pond. This will reduce shading and thereby allow sunlight to seedlings, promoting a more diverse growth around the pond margin.

Other neutral grassland

In order to maintain the other neutral grassland, bramble scrub must not exceed 15% of the total areas and will be cut back between September and January, using hand-held tools. Portsmouth Water's plan (Portsmouth Water (2024) Westergate WTW Management) has outlined that the scrub to the south-east will be cut back every 2 years, that around the pond every 2-3 years and that along the eastern margins currently requires no management. The scrub along the western boundary will be maintained at a width between 2m and 3m, showing this habitat will be well protected and managed beneficially. The other neutral grassland surrounding the buildings and main road will be mown more regularly, although left to flower in June.

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Portsmouth Water's management plan (Portsmouth Water (2024) Westergate WTW Management) outlines that no management of the woodland, nor of mature trees is required, except the removal of overhanging branches or dangerous trees, in addition to maintaining shrubs and bramble every 1-2 years. This can only be achieved following the branches or trees to be removed being checked for PRFs.

Enhancements

To improve the habitats within the blueline boundary, the other neutral grassland to the south will be enhanced using a wildflower mix. The PEA report (Ecosupport (2025) Westergate_WTW_Preliminary_Ecological_Appraisal_FINAL_1) outlines the methodology for planting and managing this mix to ensure it is maintained appropriately. Since two cuts will be carried out per year, the sward height will be kept relatively long, connecting the grassland to the ponds, the scrub and the woodland. This greatly improves the habitat onsite, by increasing the species richness and abundance, as well as enhancing biodiversity, since greater opportunities are provided for foraging and commuting wildlife.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all of the habitats within the blueline boundary have been retained or enhanced. Specifically, the other neutral grassland to the south will be enhanced with a wildflower mix. This will increase plant species richness and abundance and subsequently diversity, additionally enhancing the wider site for wildlife. Management strategies and protection measures have been outlined by Portsmouth Water and Ecosupport to protect the habitats within this blueline and ensure they are maintained successfully.

Kind regards,

Shannon Dagnell MBiol

Assistant Ecologist

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Reviewed by:

Lewis Lakudzala MRes ACIEEM

Project Ecologist

References

Ecosupport (2025) Westergate_WTW_Preliminary_Ecological_Appraisal_FINAL_1

Portsmouth Water (2024) Westergate WTW Management

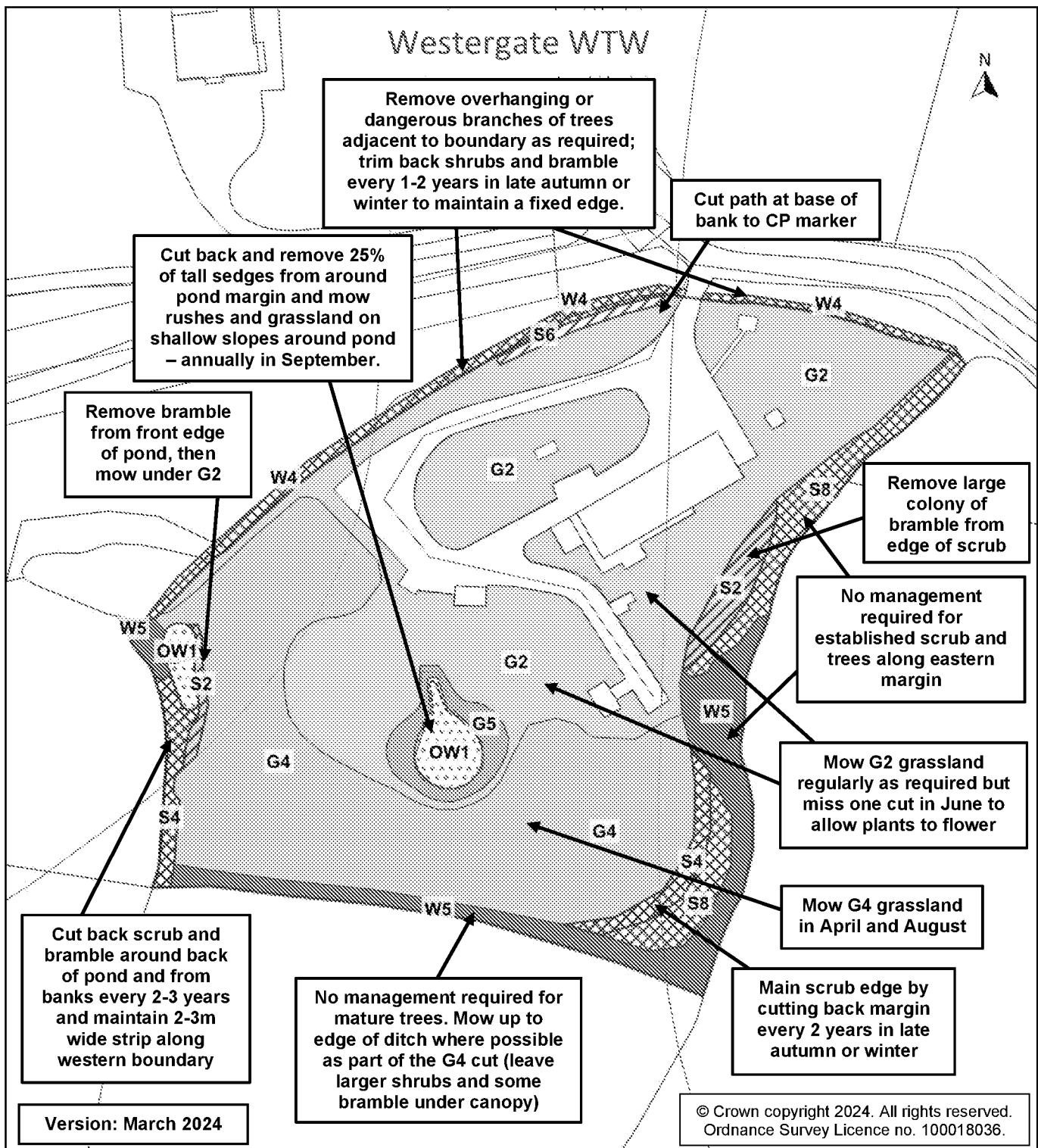
UKHab Ltd. (2023). *UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions Version 2.01* (July 2023).

Appendix I

Portsmouth Water Management Plan

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Open water management

Standing water body management (OW1)

Grassland management

Regular mowing with one summer cut missed (G2)

Two cuts per year, spring and late summer (G4)

One cut per year, late summer (G5)

Woodland management

Boundary, ride and glade maintenance (W4)

Non-intervention or limited intervention (W5)

Scrub management

Established scrub removal (S2)

Fixed edge scrub and tree management (S4)

General hedgerow management (S6)

Limited intervention (S8)