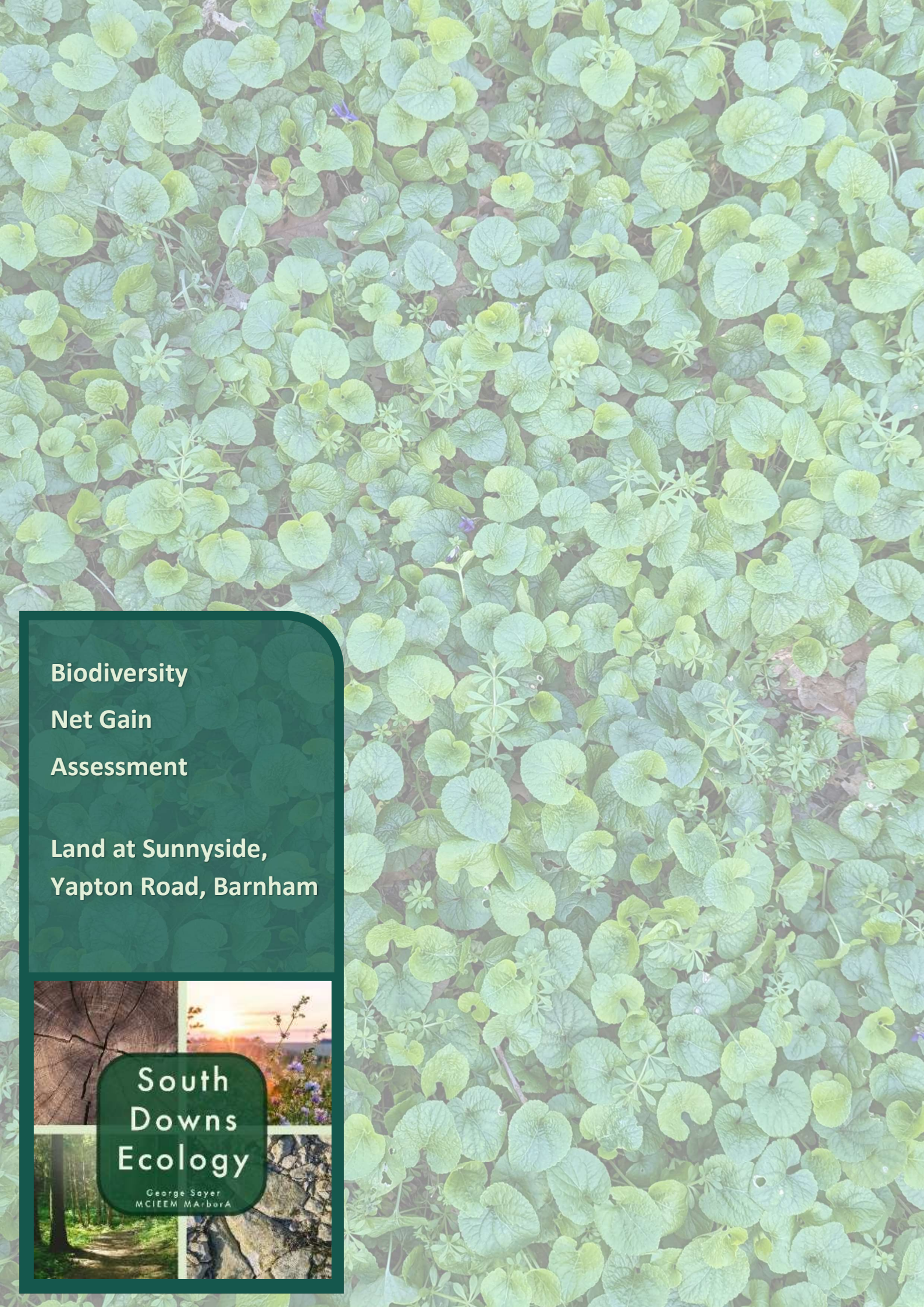


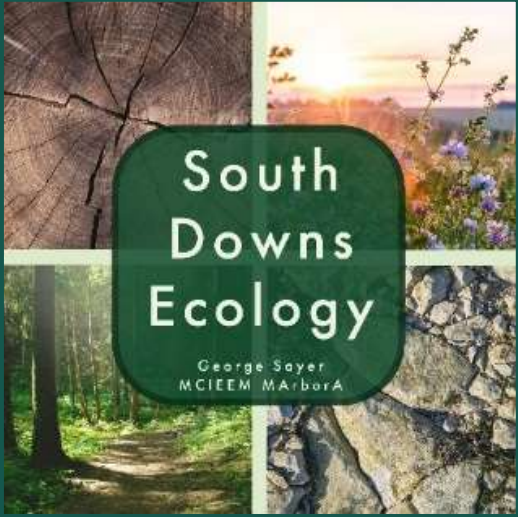


Biodiversity

Net Gain

Assessment

**Land at Sunnyside,
Yapton Road, Barnham**



**South
Downs
Ecology**

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Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Residential Development on Land at Sunnyside, Yapton Road, Barnham

Version 4 – 21st April 2026

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Summary

The applicant has commissioned a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of proposals for a new residential development on land at Sunnyside, Yapton Road, Barnham.

The site consists of a large field consisting of modified grassland, small patches of bramble and mixed scrub, buildings and developed land.

A quantitative assessment of the ecological impact of the proposals has been undertaken through use of the Natural England statutory Metric (2025). The calculation is completed to confirm whether the proposals accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), and Arun Local Plan Policies.

The proposals would result in a 2.21 Unit, 13.50% net gain in habitat units, a 1.56 unit, 60.62% gain in hedge units and a 0.10 unit, 110.15% net gain in ditch units. The proposals therefore achieve, fully on-site, a compliant gain and significantly exceed the necessary statutory gain in all categories. All trading rules are passed and the proposed habitat enhancement and creation are considered achievable and suitable, and sufficiently precautionary.

The proposals include significant enhancements in terms of relatively large areas of moderate-distinctiveness habitats; the habitat all lies within the redline boundary, and could ultimately be secured through a legal agreement. A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan would be necessary to detail how habitat management, creation and enhancement would occur. Monitoring is likely to be required, which shall be agreed with the LPA. These details shall be secured as part of the standard BNG condition.

The proposals achieve a gain and as such the proposals accord with the Environment Act 2021, relevant Arun local policies and the guidance within the NPPF (2024).

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The applicant has commissioned a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of proposals for a new residential development on land at Sunnyside, Yapton Road, Barnham.
- 1.2 The following report details the rationale, methodology, calculation, and management required as part of this assessment. This assessment has been carried out by George Sayer (BSc(Hons) Environmental Sciences, PgDip Endangered Species Recovery, MCIEEM, MARborA).

Site Description

- 1.3 The site incorporates a number of modified grassland fields, scrub, buildings and developed land. The site covers approximately 8 hectares (ha) of land north of Yapton Road in the village of Barnham. There is a railway line directly to the north of the site, with residential properties and agricultural land to the east, south and west.
- 1.4 The wider landscape is characterised by rural villages, towns, farmland and woodland parcels. The A29 is 2.7 kilometres (km) west and Bognor Regis is approximately 4.6km south-west of the site.
- 1.5 Proposals
- 1.6 The proposals are for construction of a new residential development on the land, accessed from Yapton Road to the south. This is detailed below.



Figure 1 – Illustrative Masterplan. Davies Landscape Architects Drawing: DLA-2242-100-DR-L101.S12 Site Layout

2.0 Scope of Assessment

1. *Assess the current baseline habitat, hedge and watercourse value of the site*
2. *Assess the likely features retained, removed, created and enhanced*
3. *Calculate the change in biodiversity value*
4. *Provide recommendations for management to ensure habitats proposed are achieved*

3.0 Legislative Background

Legislation and Policy

- 3.1 In England, BNG is mandatory from 12 February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%.
- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) Paragraph 187 states:
- “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - (c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
 - (e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - (f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 3.3 BNG is also mandated through Arun Local Plan Policy ENV DM5 Development and biodiversity, which states that:
- 3.4 “Development schemes shall, in the first instance, seek to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and protect existing habitats on site. They shall also however incorporate elements of biodiversity including green walls, roofs, bat and bird boxes as well as landscape features minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not). Development schemes shall also be appropriately designed to facilitate the emergence of new habitats through the creation of links between habitat areas and open spaces. Together, these provide a network of green spaces which serve to reconnect isolated sites and facilitate species movement. Where there is evidence of a protected species on a proposed development site, planning applications shall include a detailed survey of the subject species, with details of measures to be incorporated into the development scheme to avoid loss of the species. This involves consideration of any impacts that will affect the species directly or indirectly, whether within the application site or in an area outside of the site, which may be indirectly affected by the proposals. All surveys shall be carried out at an appropriate time of year and shall be undertaken by a qualified and, where appropriate, suitably licensed person. All developments shall have regard to Natural England's standing advice for protected species.”
- 3.5 Further information on how BNG is dealt with in Arun can be found at:
<https://www.arun.gov.uk/biodiversity-net-gain-information-and-guidance/>

4.0 Methods

Assessment Method

- 4.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment within this report was carried out by George Sayer (BSc(Hons) PgDip MCIEEM MABorA) in April 2026.

Site Assessments

- 4.2 The site was subject to a site survey on 13th May 2025 conforming to the UK Habitat Classification system v2.01 (UKHab Ltd 2023) and the habitats assessed in accordance with the Natural England Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide (2025). The assessment was subsequently confirmed as current on repeat visits with the last being the 15th April 2026. Where required, existing and proposed habitat condition was assessed using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments (2025). Existing habitats are detailed on the Site Habitat Plan (GS463.Sunnyside.SHP.v3). Proposed habitats are detailed on the Site Proposed Habitat Plan (GS463.Sunnyside.SPHP.v5). The areas of habitat proposed have been determined through reference to an illustrative Masterplan produced by Davies Landscape Architects (shown above).
- 4.3 The site was subject to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in accordance with current best practice (JNCC, 2010; CIEEM, 2017) to ascertain whether any other ecological constraints, or impacts upon protected species or priority habitats were likely. The results of this are detailed separately within the Ecological Impact Assessment (GS463.Sunnyside.EcIA).

Calculations

- 4.4 All calculations were carried out using the current Natural England Statutory Biodiversity Metric, in accordance with the User Guide. Condition Assessment was conducted using the condition assessment spreadsheets for the relevant habitats. The assessment was updated on 15th July 2025 to utilise the latest documents issued by Natural England on 5th July 2025, available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>). Refer to GS463.Sunnyside.BNGMetric.v6 and GS463.Sunnyside.BNGConditionAssessment.v2.
- 4.5 Calculations were undertaken to the nearest 10 square metres. Linear habitats were measured to the nearest 10 linear metres. A summary of the results is included below; the full metric spreadsheet and condition assessments accompany this report as Excel documents.
- 4.6 Grassland species richness was assessed using 10no. 1sqm quadrats dispersed across the patches of habitat, within which all species were identified and an estimate of abundance of each species made. The update survey was conducted at an optimal season for grassland identification, and was further updated in August 2025 to minimise the risk of any species being missed. Given the habitat type, this is considered a sufficient level of effort and ensures that features of ecological interest were not missed.
- 4.7 The site is not known to be part of a strategic wildlife corridor. For this reason, all habitats are considered to be of *low strategic significance*.
- 4.8 The site contains no irreplaceable habitat. No degradation has occurred on-site. Some of the modified grassland has been converted into arable land following the site surveys; however, the land is rapidly reverting to modified grassland which would likely be achieved by spring 2026. As such, this is considered only a temporary impact. The habitat has been considered as modified grassland throughout.

- 4.9 A treeline is present along the western boundary of the site. Whilst part of this lies within and part without the site, for the purposes of adopting a precautionary approach the treeline has been considered as 'on-site'.

5.0 Summary of Baseline and Proposed Ecological Conditions

Area Habitats

5.1 The existing site is formed of the following habitats:

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition	Area retained	Area enhanced
Modified grassland	7.969	Poor	0.166	1.302
Bramble scrub	0.047	N/A	0	0
Developed land; sealed surface	0.022	N/A - Other	0	0
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.023	N/A - Other	0	0
Mixed scrub	0.022	Moderate	0	0.022
Rural tree	0.0081	Moderate	0.0081	0

5.2 The proposals would create:

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition
Developed land; sealed surface	4.0859	N/A - Other
Vegetated garden	1.7511	N/A
Mixed scrub	0.45	Good
Urban tree	0.6107	Moderate
Bioswale	0.303	Moderate

5.3 The proposals would enhance:

Baseline Habitat	Area (ha)	Enhanced Habitat	Condition
		Other Neutral	
Modified Grassland	1.302	Grassland	Moderate
Mixed Scrub	0.022	Mixed Scrub	Good

5.4 A significant element of caution has been applied in the above measurement of habitats. As shown in the Site Proposed Habitat Plan, all central communal areas have been designated as 'vegetated garden' with areas of developed land shown for the LEAP. In reality, some of these areas might contain areas of surfacing but others will also likely be both of higher ecological value than this, and as communal land, securable into the future. At present, 150 trees are shown in the wider site area and a further 80 in the built-up area of the site. Only the 150 trees are currently included in the metric; this allows for a reduction in the number of trees due to re-designs and also allows for an element of thinning over time.

5.5 The areas of vegetated garden have been calculated as shown but then further reduced by almost 20%. The total ratio of vegetated garden to developed land aligns with the guideline recommendation to assume a ratio of 30:70 when the development design is unknown. This allows for changes to the design as well as addition of terraces and similar surfaced areas not currently detailed, to increase the areas of surfacing by up to 20%.

- 5.6 Areas of grassland enhanced are shown in the proposed habitat plan, but in the metric have also been reduced by 10%. This allows for the fact that some margins will not be suitable for enhancement e.g. due to heavy shading or footfall from residents.
- 5.7 The habitat creation and enhancements are considered realistic and achievable; given the likely shading present to the margins, achieving good condition neutral grassland is unlikely but moderate condition would be relatively simple, as would good condition scrub. Bioswales and rain gardens should readily achieve moderate condition as will trees.
- 5.8 The proposed habitat creation and enhancement is all considered to result in 'additional'; whilst some areas of grassland in particular would be retained for the purpose of protecting reptiles and badgers in particular, the enhancement is over and above this requirement and as such can count fully towards the gain.
- 5.9 The original baseline score of 16.37 habitat units will increase to 18.58 units, representing **a gain of 13.50%**. This achieves a compliant gain, significantly exceeding the statutory gain requirement of 10%, with all trading rules satisfied.

Hedgerow Habitats

- 5.10 The existing site is formed of the following hedges:

Hedgerow Type	Length (km)	Condition	Area retained	Area enhanced
Native hedgerow	0.07	Poor	0	0
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.04	Poor	0	0
Species-rich native hedgerow	0.15	Moderate	0.15	0
Ecologically-valuable line of trees	0.3	Poor	0.3	0

- 5.11 A line of trees and scrub is present to the western boundary, which falls partly within and partly outside the ownership and control of the site and as a precaution is included in the assessment. Given the mixed ownership, whilst this could be considered enhanced by creation of a buffer to the west of the site, at this time the treeline is considered solely as retained.
- 5.12 It is assumed all the non-native hedgerow and the hedgerow to the front would be lost. In reality the hedgerows to the front may remain but at this point proposing loss follows the precautionary principle and avoids overly constraining proposals at the access. Whilst hedgerow creation is not fully detailed on the site proposed habitat plan as yet, it is understood that approximately 0.512 km of hedgerows outside of residential curtilages are proposed to be created. For the time being these are considered to be native hedgerows in moderate condition:

Hedgerow Type	Length (km)	Condition
Native Hedgerow	0.521	Moderate

- 5.13 The original baseline score of 2.58 hedgerow units will increase to 4.14 units, representing **a gain of 60.62%**. This achieves a compliant gain, significantly exceeding the statutory gain requirement of 10%, with all trading rules satisfied.

Watercourse Habitats

5.14 The existing site is formed of the following watercourses:

Watercourse Type	Length (km)	Condition	Length retained	Length enhanced
Ditch	0.03	Poor	0.03	0

5.15 It has been determined that the ditch would be retained.

5.16 The following new watercourses will be created:

Watercourse Type	Length (km)	Condition
Ditch	0.05	Poor

5.17 The original baseline score of 0.09 watercourse units will increase to 0.18 units, representing **a gain of 110.15%**. This achieves a compliant gain, significantly exceeding the statutory gain requirement of 10%, with all trading rules satisfied.

6.0 Management

- 6.1 The proposals within the proposed residential curtilage involve creation of habitats considered non-significant, including vegetated garden and developed land. Much of the communal areas are currently designated as such and are likely to be secured by planning conditions relating to landscape design.
- 6.2 The wider proposals include creation and enhancement of moderate distinctiveness habitats of moderate and good condition. These are sufficient to be considered as 'significant'. As such, the creation and appropriate management of these habitats need to be secured through an appropriate mechanism. Given the scale of the proposals and that these are on-site, a Section 106 legal agreement is considered the most appropriate mechanism. It is likely to be necessary for the LPA to monitor the habitat enhancement and management; should monitoring be required, the appropriate monitoring fee shall be agreed with the LPA.
- 6.3 A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan would be necessary to detail how habitat management, creation and enhancement would occur.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposals would result in a 13.50% net gain in habitat units, a 60.62% net gain in hedgerow units and a 110.15% net gain in ditch units.
- 7.2 This assessment demonstrates that policy compliant Biodiversity Net Gain is capable of being delivered wholly on-site.
- 7.3 The proposals involve significant enhancements which must be secured using an appropriate mechanism as described, carried out in accordance with a suitable Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and subject to appropriate monitoring.
- 7.4 Assuming that a final detailed assessment is carried out as part of a standard BNG condition and BNG Gain Plan at the reserved matters stage, and the habitat creation and enhancement undertaken, secured and monitored, the proposals are likely to result in biodiversity gains in accordance with local and national policy and relevant legislation.

8.o References

Natural England (2025) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, Condition Assessments and User Guide. Available Online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides> (accessed 15th July 2025)

UK Hab Ltd. (2023). The Habitat Classification Version 2.01. Available online