



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

Eastlands, Littlehampton Road, Ferring BN12 6PB

Document Reference	Date	Author	Reviewed By
250814-BNG-01a	18.12.2025	Brooke Waites, MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist	Tom Haley MSc, Head of Ecology

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses Biodiversity Net Gains/Losses estimated at the proposed development site known as Eastlands, Littlehampton.

The proposed development includes the change of use of two paddocks from horse grazing to secure dog walking, each including a small parking area.

The site is dominated by modified grassland, currently with a hardstanding access track joining to the public highway. The existing paddocks include a small number of trees, which are due to be retained.

Key Results:

The proposed development is due to result in a total of 0.23 habitat units and 0.03 hedgerow units, which equates to a 10.02% increase in habitat units. Hedgerow unit increase cannot be calculated as a percentage, as the baseline includes zero hedgerow units.

2. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

This report has been instructed by Mr C Ellis.

The proposed development includes the change of use of two paddocks from horse grazing to secure dog walking, each including a small parking area.

Overall Site Description

The site is located to the north of Ferring, West Sussex. The wider blue line boundary includes a number of horse grazing paddocks, and associated stables and training areas. The site itself consists of two paddocks dominated by modified grassland, with a hardstanding access track joining to the public highway. The existing paddocks include a small number of trees, which are due to be retained. Areas of grassland are present on either side of the access track, but located outside of the site boundary. This area includes recently planted tree saplings.

The central grid reference for the site is TQ 09349 03761. The surveyed area is approximately 1.2 hectares.

Limitations

Biodiversity Net Gain assessments and calculations can only provide a proxy measure for the real long-term biodiversity changes that occur on any given site.

Whilst the Biodiversity Metric tool assesses the numerical losses and gains of habitats affected as part of the development, it does not include certain other important outcomes or benefits which cannot be assessed numerically.

3. METHODOLOGY

This report is based on data collected during a survey undertaken on 24th November 2025 by Brooke Waites, an experienced ecological surveyor.

The vegetation and habitat types within the site were noted during the survey in accordance with the categories specified in the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd 2023¹). As part of the survey, a habitat condition assessment was undertaken of habitats within the site. The full condition assessment for habitats within the site are shown in Appendix A. Photographs of the site are shown in Appendix D.

The value of the on-site habitats and post development proposals have been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, 2023²).

Good Practice Principals for Development

Good practice principles for biodiversity net gain are set out within Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles For Development³. This report has been undertaken with the principles of the metric in mind. The core principals outlined below:

Principle 1	This metric does not change existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, or policy requirements. The use of this metric does not override the ecological mitigation hierarchy and other requirements (such as consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands).
Principle 2	This metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidance and professional codes.
Principle 3	This metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice.
Principle 4	Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values.
Principle 5	This metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance.
Principle 6	Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe.

¹ UKHab Ltd, 2023 UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <http://www.ukhab.org>).

² DEFRA (2023). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool at Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool

³ Baker et al, 2019. Biodiversity Net Gain. Good Practise Principles for Development. A Practical Guide.

Principle 7	Created and enhanced habitats should seek, where practical and reasonable, to be local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation.
Principle 8	The metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. However, proposals should aim to: maintain habitat extent (supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks) and ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function

Mitigation Hierarchy

The table below outlines how the Mitigation Hierarchy will be followed in relation to the site proposals.

Avoidance	The site has minimised its impact by utilising an area of poor modified grassland, already subject to heavy use from grazing horses. Trees within the site will be retained.
Mitigation and Compensation	Additional tree planting will be included within the scheme to compensate for the loss of small areas of grassland.
Enhancement	To ensure a 10% gain is achieved, 22 trees will be planted within the scheme, additionally a hedge will be included bordering the proposed car parking.

4. BASELINE CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Baseline Habitats

The site is dominated by modified grassland, currently with a hardstanding access track joining to the public highway. The existing paddocks include a small number of trees, which are due to be retained.

A map showing the baseline habitats is shown in Appendix B.

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition	Notes
Developed land; sealed surface	0.158	N/A	Existing access to public highway
Modified Grassland	1.012	Poor	Horse grazing area. Generally heavily grazed, short sward with little diversity.
Rural tree	0.0326	Moderate	See Condition Assessment Appendix A. 8 trees within the site due to be retained.

Proposed Habitats

The proposed development is due to result in a small increase in developed land and sealed surfaces, due to the provision of parking and shelters. 22 new trees are also proposed within the development, along with a small hedge along each parking area. A map showing the proposed habitats is shown in Appendix C.

Habitat Type	Area/Length (ha/km)	Condition	Notes
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0185	N/A	Proposed new access and parking
Rural tree	0.0896	Moderate	22 new small trees within the site.
Ornamental hedgerow	0.03 km	Poor	Hedge planted around parking area.

5. RESULTS

The proposed development is due to result in a total of 0.23 habitat units and 0.03 hedgerow units, which equates to a **10.02%** increase in habitat units. Hedgerow unit increase cannot be calculated as a percentage, as the baseline includes zero hedgerow units.

The image below shows a summary of the results from the metric.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.23
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.03
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	10.02%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	N/A
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Project implementation

The table below details the criteria habitats will need to achieve to order to meet the target condition (Please note, this is not a comprehensive list but should be used to guide landscape design).

Habitat Type and Target Condition	Criteria required.
Rural Trees (Moderate)	• Tree species should be native • Trees must be protected from damage through human activities such as vandalism, herbicide use or strimming damage. • More than 20% of the tree canopy area should over sail natural vegetation.
Ornamental Hedge	N/A – Default to poor condition.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Habitat Condition Assessment Sites

Appendix B – Existing Habitat Plan (BNG Classifications)

Appendix C – Proposed Layout

Appendix D – Photographs

Appendix A – Habitat Condition Assessment Sheet

Habitat Type: Urban Tree

General Notes: All trees of a similar age, size and of the same species. As such a single condition assessment is shown.

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed	Notes (such as justification)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	Silver birch and maple.
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Yes	Individual trees automatically pass this criterion
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	No	Not mature.
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Yes	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	Generally immature-semi mature trees in moderate condition, lacking deadwood, or damage which would provide cavities.
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	
Number of criteria passed:		4	
Condition Score:		Moderate	

Habitat Type: Grassland (Low Distinctiveness)

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² 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.	Yes*	*Note due to the timing of the survey, this has been assumed as passed as the species count was on the boundary and likely to be slightly higher during peak season. However, grassland is grazed and has limited sward height. Species included <i>Lolium</i> sp. <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> , <i>Achillea millefolium</i> , <i>Galium aparie</i> .
B	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.	No	Grazed grassland with no variation in sward height.
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area.	Yes	No bramble scrub present.
D	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.	Yes	No evidence of damage present.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	No	Areas of bare ground present, largely in concentrated areas but account for >10 % overall.
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	No bracken present.

G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Yes	No invasive species recorded.
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		Yes*	
Number of criteria passed		5	
Condition Score:		Moderate	

Appendix B – Existing Habitat Plan (BNG Classifications)



Legend

- Blue Line Boundary
- Red Line Boundary

Habitats

- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland

Trees

- Existing (retained)



Site name:
Eastlands, Littlehampton Road.

Plan title:
Existing Habitats

Date: 18/12/2025

Appendix C – Proposed Layout



Legend

- Blue Line Boundary
- Red Line Boundary

Habitats

- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Proposed hedge

Trees

- Proposed (locations indicative only)
- Existing (retained)



Site name:
Eastlands, Littlehampton Road.

Plan title:
Proposed Habitats

Date: 18/12/2025

Appendix D – Photographs



Image 1: Access track within the site.



Image 2: Existing modified grassland with trees.



Image 3: Modified grassland.