

Biodiversity Net Gain
Assessment
Land at Wicks Farm

South
Downs
Ecology

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Quality Assurance			
Report date:	Version:	Author:	Reviewed by:
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Client:	Mr D. Moore		
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Report conditions:	The content is provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. The methods and recommendations in this report are based on the following: • CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017) • Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report & Audit Templates Version 1 (CIEEM, July 2021) • Natural England (2025). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.		

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1. Executive Summary

The following report has been compiled for proposals for renewal of temporary permission for workers' accommodation at Wicks Farm, Ford Lane, Ford.

Following an assessment of the proposals and the proposed enhancements, it is determined that the proposals could result in Biodiversity Net Gain and accord with the requirements of the Environment Act (2021).

The proposals of themselves could achieve a habitat area gain of 10.80% and a 22.32% gain in hedgerow units. To achieve the proposed gain, it is proposed to include the following enhancements, which will be secured by condition:

- Creation of 0.06 ha of mixed scrub, poor condition;
- Creation of 0.04 ha of mixed scrub, moderate condition; and
- Enhancement of 0.08 km of the existing hedgerow from species-poor to species-rich

No watercourses are impacted by proposals.

The proposed enhancement/creation detailed above are not considered 'significant' and their planting and retention could be secured through a Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan at the condition stage. The LPA can secure the gains via condition.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background and Site Description

The applicant, Mr. D. Moore has commissioned a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for proposals for renewal of temporary permission for workers' accommodation at Wicks Farm, Ford Lane, Ford.

The habitats on-site consist of existing areas of modified grassland with an area of tall forbs to the east. The remainder of the site is developed land in the form of existing paths, access and buildings.

The site is not within or adjacent any designated sites, or Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). The eastern portion of site lies within an area of the Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB).

No irreplaceable habitats are present on-site or directly adjacent to the site, and no degradation has occurred prior to this application. The site was altered from the agricultural baseline in 2023 in accordance with a planning permission and as such, the current baseline is considered valid.

2.2 Proposals

The proposals involve renewal of temporary permission for workers' accommodation at Wicks Farm, Ford Lane, Ford. This would be accompanied by ecological and landscape enhancements detailed in a package provided by Deacon Design.

2.3 Scope of Assessment

This BNG Assessment is valid for a maximum of one year. If there are any alterations to the site conditions, BNG methodologies, or the proposals, the calculations are likely to become invalid, and an ecologist should be contacted for advice.

3. Legislation and Policy

3.1 Legislation

The Environment Act 2021 requires developments to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG. The requirement applies to most non-householder planning applications that result in the loss of more than 25m² of vegetated habitat. Developers must calculate BNG using the Biodiversity Metric and secure it for a minimum of 30 years. Options for achieving BNG include on-site measures, off-site enhancements recorded in a national biodiversity gain site register, or the purchase of statutory Biodiversity Credits. Secondary legislation under the Act sets out the procedural and technical requirements, including Habitat Condition Assessments using the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) methodology and the submission of a completed Statutory BNG Metric. Long-term management of BNG must be secured, e.g. through Section 106 agreements or Conservation Covenants.

3.2 National Policy

Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) states the need for planning policies and decisions to enhance the natural and local environment. The NPPF highlights the importance of minimising impacts of development on wildlife and providing net gains for biodiversity.

3.3 Local Policy

The site sits within the Arun District.

Policy ENV DM5 Development and biodiversity states that:

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.

4. Methods

4.1 Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online resource was accessed in March 2026 to search for Protected and Priority Habitats, or Habitats of Principal Importance listed under the NERC Act on-site or within 500.0m.

4.2 Site Assessments

A site visit was conducted on 5th November 2025 by George Sayer (MCIEEM, MArborA). George is an experienced Senior Lead Ecologist and a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). He has been undertaking ecology surveys and botanical assessments since 2016.

Habitats were recorded broadly according to the UKHab Classification System as described within the UK Habitats Manual v2.01 (UKHab Ltd, 2023). All habitats present on-site were recorded on a UKHab map (Figure No. 01). Whilst December is a suboptimal month for assessing grasslands, given the nature of these habitats this is not considered a significant limitation, and a precautionary approach has been adopted where any ambiguity arises.

The habitat classification and assessments were completed in combination with digital resources, including aerial imagery from Google Earth and mapping from magic.gov.uk. Given the nature of the site, it is extremely unlikely that any changes have occurred on-site since the photographs were taken, and the evidence provided is more than sufficient to assess the habitats present, even outside of the optimal season.

Habitats were classified in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification System v2.01 (UKHab Ltd 2023) and assessed using Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric (2025). The classifications are illustrated on the Site Baseline Habitat Plan, produced using The Land App. See Figure 5.1.

Condition Assessment has been completed using the Statutory Metric - Condition Assessment Sheets (2025). Where any uncertainty arises as to the condition or passing/failing of any criteria, a precautionary approach has been adopted and the higher value used.

New habitats have been identified and assessed in accordance with detailed site information in the form of scaled plans, provided by the architect to enable a detailed assessment to be conducted. Proposed habitat types and conditions have been determined using both professional judgement and current best practice guidelines.

The baseline has been assumed as per the current site conditions; the site was converted from arable land in accordance with planning permission in 2023 and as such the current baseline is considered to be appropriate.

5. Results

There is an *Area That Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity* and a *Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)* within the eastern portion of site. The mapped measures mainly refer to river corridor and coastal floodplain enhancements. Consequently, all habitats on-site are classified as having low strategic significance, other than the tall forbs, and proposed scrub to the east of the site, and the hedgerow, which have all been proposed as medium strategic significance.

Whilst the site habitat map does not display all small paths to the existing accommodation buildings, an additional 10% of developed land has been allowed for these. A small area of hard surface is proposed to be converted to grasscrete, but following the precautionary approach this is considered to be retained as developed land.

5.1 Area Habitats

Baseline Habitats		
- o 0.07 ha of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (roads and paths) - o 0.27 ha of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (buildings) - o 0.56 ha of Modified Grassland, Poor Condition - o 0.23 ha of Tall Forbs, Moderate Condition		
Retained Habitats		
- o 0.07 ha of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (roads and paths) - o 0.27 ha of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (buildings) - o 0.5 ha of Modified Grassland, Poor Condition - o 0.19 ha of Tall Forbs, Moderate Condition		
Proposed On-Site Habitats		
The following habitats are proposed as part of the development: - o 0.06 ha of Mixed Scrub, Poor Condition (in western area) - o 0.04 ha of Mixed Scrub, Moderate Condition (in eastern area)		
Habitats Summary		
- o The existing site has a baseline of 2.13 Habitat Units. See Figure 5.1. - o The proposals on-site will result in a gain of 0.23 Habitat Units (+10.80%). Therefore, it does achieve the mandatory +10%.		
Total Net Unit Change		Total Net % Change
+0.23 Habitat Units		+10.80%

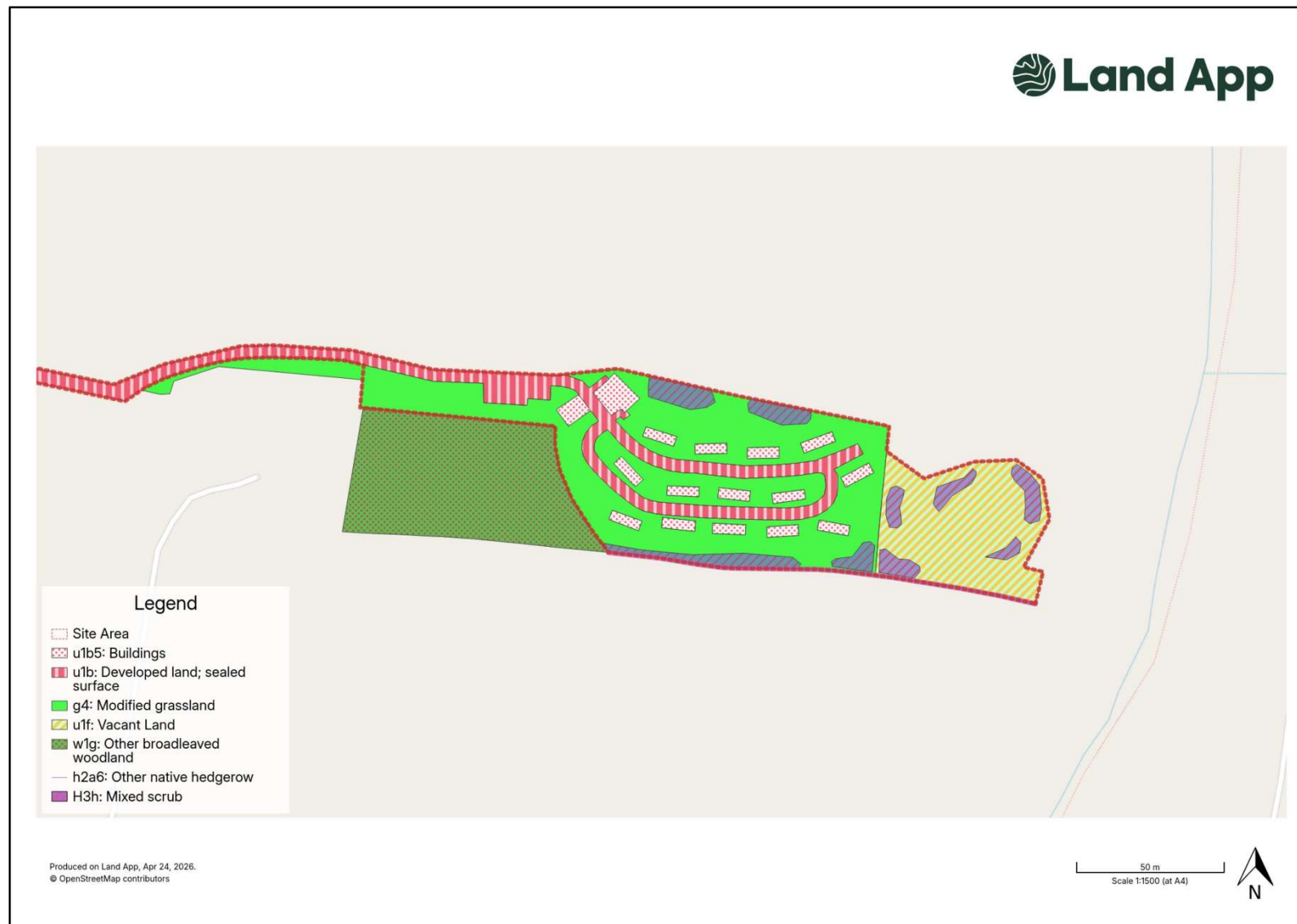
5.2 Hedgerows

Baseline Hedgerows		
0.15 km of Native hedgerow with trees, Moderate Condition		
Retained Hedgerows		
0.07 km of Native hedgerow with trees		
Proposed On-Site Hedgerow Enhancement		
0.07 km of Native hedgerow with trees, enhanced to species-rich native hedgerow with trees through reinforcement planting along the southern boundary of site		
Hedgerow Summary		
- The existing site has a baseline of 1.32 Hedgerow Units. See Figure 5.1. - The proposals on-site will result in a gain of 0.29 Hedgerow Units (+22.32%). Therefore, it does achieve the mandatory +10%.		
	Total Net Unit Change	Total Net % Change
	+0.29 Hedgerow Units	+22.32%

Figure 5.1: Site Baseline Habitat Plan



Figure 5.1: Site Proposed Habitat Plan



6. Habitat Creation, Management and Monitoring

The proposals can achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain on-site in the following manner, although other scenarios would also be possible:

- Creation of 0.06 ha of mixed scrub, poor condition;
- Creation of 0.04 ha of mixed scrub, moderate condition; and
- Enhancement of 0.08 km of the existing hedgerow from species-poor to species-rich

A number of trees are also proposed but at present, not included within calculations. All of these proposals are considered achievable and reasonable, and would not be considered 'significant' and as such, could be secured through a Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan, secured by condition and not requiring a legal agreement, monitoring schedule or charge.

7. Site Aerial



8. Site Plan

