LAND WEST OF BILSHAM ROAD, YAPTON

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

794-ENV-ECO-21633
Final
July 2025

rpsgroup.com

Document status

Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review date
A	Draft, for comment	DLS	EW	EW	April 2025
B	Final	DLS	EW	EW	May 2025
C	Final	DLS	EW	EW	July 2025

Prepared by:

RPS

Prepared for:

Redrow Homes Limited

Contents

Appendices

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope of this Report

1.1.1 RPS were commissioned by Redrow Homes Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the Land West of Bilsham Road, Yapton, BN18 0LA (henceforth referred to as The Site).

1.1.2 In order to determine the habitats present on The Site, a UK Habitat Survey was undertaken on the 24th October 2024. This followed standard best-practice guidelines (UKHab, 2023).

1.1.3 This BNG assessment report aims to:

- calculate and assess the baseline ecological status and condition of current habitats identified onsite;
- calculate the biodiversity value of the Site post-development; and
- provide a summary of the habitat enhancements and creation proposals designed to ensure net gain is achieved.

1.1.4 The recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist and therefore the view of RPS.

1.2 Biodiversity Net Gain and Methods

1.2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain is defined in Baker *et al* (2019) as:

> *"Development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before"*

1.2.2 The requirement for developments to seek to achieve BNG arises from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024), which states in Para. 187 (d) that:

> *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by … minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity."*

1.2.3 As outlined in the Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan Document (MSDC 2022) it is required that developments:

> *"Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value and ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity overall… Avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement, and good design. Where this is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss."*

1.2.4 There is no single set method for quantifying the assessment of BNG, but one method is the use of biodiversity calculators to assess the biodiversity value of habitats pre- and post-development based on habitat type, distinctiveness and condition.

1.2.5 A biodiversity index is derived for the baseline and for the proposed development, and BNG is considered to be achieved where an increase in value is delivered (onsite or offsite), and where habitats of a higher value are not replaced exclusively with habitats of a lower value.

1.2.6 Defra made available its beta test update of its BNG assessment tool in April 2023 (to Version 4.0). This tool has been used for the assessment in this report. The tool and associated documents were downloaded from:

http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5850908674228224.

Condition Assessment

1.2.7 Using the data collected from the UK Habitat Survey, a habitat condition assessment was undertaken for the habitats present within the project boundary. The appropriate 'condition sheet' was first selected

via the Table TS1-1a in the technical supplement provided in the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 -Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (Panks, *et al*., 2023).

1.2.8 The condition sheet was then used to assess the individual habitats by comparing how they scored against pre-set condition assessment criteria. The criteria describe what components are needed for the habitat to be of good, moderate or poor value.

1.2.9 Each habitat was scored the following:

- 1 – Poor;
- 2 – Moderate; and
- 3 – Good.

1.2.10 The calculator allows these to be further divided and provides categories for fairly good and fairly poor. The ecologist undertaking the assessment used their professional judgement, considering the habitat condition assessment criteria, to decide when it was suitable to use these categories.

1.2.11 It should be noted that some habitats are given a fixed score and do not need assessing.

2 BASELINE DESCRIPTION

2.1.1 The baseline description is taken from the habitat assessment conducted during the UKHab Habitat Survey. Botanical assessment was carried out according to the DAFOR botanical scale. Only habitats that were deemed to have an ecological value are discussed further.

2.2 UK Habitat Survey – Overview

2.2.1 The UK Habitat Survey identified that the Site comprised predominately modified grassland bordered by a native hedgerow with trees and dense and scattered scrub. A wet ditch was present along the western boundary.

2.2.2 A full list of the onsite habitats identified in the UK Habitat Survey on the Site is provided below, with the associated habitat represented in the BNG assessment:

- g4.517: Modified Grassland
- h2a, 200,203: Native Hedgerow with trees
- h3: Dense Scrub
- h10: Scattered Scrub
- h2.50: Ditch

2.3 Habitat Condition Assessment

2.3.1 The assessments below relate to the condition of the habitats present onsite at the time of the UK Habitat Survey undertaken in October 2024. The extent, distinctiveness and condition of the baseline habitats onsite are summarised respectively in the Statutory Metric.

2.3.2 Numbers in the tables in this section are copied from those generated by the Statutory metric. Note that the spreadsheet rounds the figures of credits to two decimal places which occasionally generates apparent minor discrepancies due to rounding errors when numbers are placed into tables.

2.3.3 A summary of the baseline habitat areas, habitat units, area retained, and habitat units lost is provided in the BNG metric submitted with this report.

g4.517: Modified Grassland

2.3.4 The majority of the Site is an open field, characteristic of a modified grassland with evidence of recent management in the past three years. The Site has previously been used as arable land, with the 2021 survey recording a monoculture of winter sown cereal, likely wheat or barley. Although, it is currently unmanaged with the 2023 survey recording remnants of a self-seeded cereal crop and fodder crop growing in areas. The grassland was dominated by *Lolium* sp. with abundant false-oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, with frequently occurring cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, sowthistle *Sonchus* sp., dandelion *Asteraceae* spp., and common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*. Occasionally curled dock *Rumex crispus*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, and broadleaf plantain *Plantago major* were present. In addition, the following species were rare within the Site, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, cleavers *Galium aparine* and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*.

2.3.5 Closer to the boundaries of the grassland, frequently occurring timothy *Phleum pratense*, yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, common nettle *Urtica dioica* and hairy willow herb *Epilobium hirsutum* were present.

2.3.6 Given that the grassland satisfied five criteria but failed the essential criteria, following the Natural England condition assessment, it would be categorised as '***poor***' condition.

h2a,200,203: Native Hedgerow with Trees

Hedgerow 1

2.3.7 A native hedgerow (H1.1) is located along the eastern boundary, between the Site and Bilsham Road. A small section of the eastern hedgerow (H1.2) is defunct in nature with a number of gaps, located towards the southern end of the Site. Both are dominated by common hazel *Corylus avellana*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and bramble. Frequently occurring field maple *Acer campestre*, pedunculate oak and elder *Sambucus nigra* was also present with some occasional goat willow.

2.3.8 Given that H1.1 satisfied six criteria, but failing more than one criterion in the same functional group (A1, B1, B2, C2), following the Natural England condition assessment this would be categorised as '***moderate'*** condition.

2.3.9 Given that the defunct hedgerow, H1.2 satisfied only 5 criteria, failing both attributes in more than one functional group (failing: A1, A2, B1, B2, C2), following the Natural England condition assessment this would be categorised as '***poor***' condition.

Hedgerow 2

2.3.10 A second hedgerow (H2) is located along the southern boundary of the Site, dominated by goat willow *Salix caprea* with occasional common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, pedunculate oak *Quercus*

robur, common ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and english elm *Ulmus procera*. Ground flora included hairy willow herb, common nettle, white dead nettle *Lamium album*, creeping thistle and cock's-foot.

2.3.11 Given that the hedgerow satisfied six criteria, but failing more than one criterion in the same functional group (C2, E1, E2), following the Natural England condition assessment this would be categorised as '***moderate***' condition.

h3 Dense Scrub

2.3.12 A dense section of scrub is present along the eastern boundary of the Site, in the north-eastern direction. This was dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, with abundant bramble and common nettle. Occasional common ivy *Hedera helix*, blackthorn, creeping thistle, and elder were also present. Butterfly bush *Buddleja* was noted in a section of scrub located next to the gate where the new access road is proposed.

2.3.13 Given that the dense scrub satisfied less than two criteria, following the Natural England condition assessment this would be categorised as '***poor***' condition.

h10 Scattered Scrub

2.3.14 Smaller areas of scattered scrub were present along the western boundary comprising predominantly bramble with occasional cock's-foot, curled dock, and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*.

2.3.15 Given that the scattered scrub fields satisfied less than two criteria, following the Natural England condition assessment this would be categorised as '***poor***' condition.

h2.50 Ditch

2.3.16 A ditch, referred to as Ryebank Rife, runs along the western boundary of the Site. It is approximately two meters deep with steep banks, running parallel to the western Site boundary. At the time of survey, the water level was approximately 20 – 30 cm deep. The ditch supports abundant hemlock-water dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* and common nettle, with occasional hart's-tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium,* hedge bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, meadow sweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, and pendoulous sedge *Carex pendula.*

2.3.17 Given that the ditch satisfied only four criteria, following the Natural England condition assessment this would be categorised as '***poor***' condition.

3 POST-DEVELOPMENT HABITAT ASSESSMENT

3.1 Onsite Habitat Creation

3.1.1 This section of the report looks at the habitats which are to be created during the construction phase of the development and provides reasoning as to their habitat classification and condition category, as was completed for the pre-development habitats.

3.1.2 The habitats described below are labelled as they are on the Landscape Masterplan, for ease of understanding; their subsequent UK / BNG classification is given within the text.

Grassland mixes

3.1.3 The below section looks at all of the grassland mixes which are to be included as part of the proposed development.

Amenity Grass

3.1.4 Areas of modified grassland will be created within the Site, largely associated with formal landscaping around the play areas and paths.

3.1.5 Due to the proposed management regime required for this habitat, the grassland will require regular cutting and be sown with a species poor mix such as a lawn mix.

3.1.6 The target condition of '***poor***' has been used to allow for the inclusion of management practices to achieve condition assessment criteria for this habitat. This condition would be achieved as the proposed habitat will not meet the essential criterion A that requires more than six species per metres squared.

3.1.7 Targeted condition assessment criteria that will be achieved through management regime include:

- Cover of scattered scrub less than 20%
- Cover of bare ground between 1%-5%;
- Cover of bracken less than 20% and scrub less than 5%; and
- Absence of non-native, invasive species.

Wildflower meadow grassland

3.1.8 Areas of wildflower meadow are to be created across the development, associated with open spaces / biodiversity areas and the ecological buffers onsite. The wildflower meadow mix used will be the Emorsgate EM2 Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture (or something similar). This mix has a large number of meadow grass and herb species, and it based on the composition, would most reasonably fall into the habitat condition category 'other neutral grassland'.

3.1.9 The condition, when assessing against the condition criteria, would most likely fit into the '***moderate'*** condition category, as it meets the following:

- A good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type.
- Sward height is varied (it is expected that this will occur naturally through the diversity of species);
- Cover of bare ground between 1%-5%;
- Cover of bracken less than 20% and scrub less than 5%; and
- The absence of non-native, invasive species.

Wetland meadow mix

3.1.10 Areas of wetland meadow are to be created across the development, largely running across the southern biodiversity area of the Site, associated with a large attenuation basin feature. The meadow mix used will be the Emorsgate EM8 Meadow Mixture for Wetlands (or something similar). This mix has a large number of meadow grass and herb species, and it based on the composition, would most reasonably fall into the habitat condition category 'other neutral grassland'.

3.1.11 The condition, when assessing against the condition criteria, would most likely fit into the '***moderate***' condition category, as it meets the following:

- A good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type.
- Sward height is varied (it is expected that this will occur naturally through the diversity of species);
- Cover of bare ground between 1%-5%;
- Cover of bracken less than 20% and scrub less than 5%; and
- The absence of non-native, invasive species.

Woodland

3.1.12 Areas of broadleaved woodland are to be included in the proposed development, associated with open spaces and the ecological buffers to hedgerows and the ditch onsite. Species will include a wet and dry native woodland mix, in keeping with the species in the immediate vicinity of the Site, and based on the composition, would most reasonably fall into the habitat condition category 'other woodland; broadleaved'.

3.1.13 **Table 3.1** details their condition, which is expected to be '**poor'** (after they have reached their target conditions).

Table 3.1 – Broadleaved woodland habitat condition assessment

Condition Assessment Criteria		Score per indicator: 3 (Good), 2 (Moderate), or 1 (Poor)
A	Age distribution of trees	1
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	3
C	Invasive plant species	3
D	Number of native tree species	3
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	1
F	Open space within woodland	1
G	Woodland regeneration	1
H	Tree health	3
I	Vegetation and ground flora	1
J	Woodland vertical structure	1
K	Veteran trees	1
L	Amount of deadwood	1
M	Woodland disturbance	2
	Total	**22**

Ornamental Shrubs

3.1.14 Proposed plantings of introduced shrub will comprise ornamental species, including a groundcover mix. Target conditions are not applicable for this habitat type.

Vegetated Garden

3.1.15 Residential proprieties will have associated gardens and private lawns. Target conditions are not applicable for this habitat type.

Native Shrub Planting

3.1.16 Areas of native shrub planting are to be created across the development, largely within the southern biodiversity area of the Site. Based on the composition, this would most reasonably fall into the habitat condition category 'mixed scrub'.

3.1.17 The condition, when assessing against the condition criteria, would most likely fit into the '***moderate***' condition category, as it meets the following:

- The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range).
  - At least 80% of scrub is native,
  - There are at least three native woody species
  - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover.
- There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA5) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover.
- The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.

Developed land (sealed surface)

3.1.18 Developed land and sealed surfaces, by default are not awarded a habitat condition, as there is no ecological value associated with them.

Native Hedgerow

3.1.19 A total length of 0.12 km of native species rich hedgerow is included in the proposed development.

3.1.20 The target condition of '***moderate***' has been used to allow for the inclusion of management practices to achieve condition assessment criteria for this habitat.

3.1.21 Targeted condition assessment criteria that will be achieved through management regime include:

- Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length;
- Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m;
- >1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length;
- <20% of plant cover dominated by species indicative of nutrient enrichment;
- >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species; and
- >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of damaged cause by human activities.

Non-native hedgerows

3.1.22 The proposed development includes a number of non-native and ornamental hedgerows, mostly small sections as part of the formal planting scheme (totalling 1.3 km). The default condition for this habitat is ***poor***.

Scattered Trees

3.1.23 186 scattered trees are included in the proposed development. The target condition of '***moderate***' has been used to allow for the inclusion of management practices to achieve condition assessment criteria for this habitat.

3.1.24 Targeted condition assessment criteria that will be achieved through management regime include:

- The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species);
- The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area (individual trees automatically pass this criterion);
- There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities; and
- More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

Ditch

3.1.25 A total length of 0.045 km of ditch is included in the proposed development.

3.1.26 The target condition of '***moderate***' has been used to allow for the inclusion of management practices to achieve condition assessment criteria for this habitat.

3.1.27 Targeted condition assessment criteria that will be achieved through management regime include:

- The ditch is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution.
- A range of emergent, submerged and floating-leaved plants are present. As a guide >10 species of emergent, floating or submerged plants present in a 20 m ditch length.
- There is less than 10% cover of filamentous algae and or duckweed *Lemna spp*. (these are signs of eutrophication).
- Less than 10% of the ditch is heavily shaded.
- Physical damage is evident along less than 5% of the ditch, with examples of damage including: excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, or any other damaging management activities.
- There is an absence of non-native plant and animal species.

4 CONCLUSIONS / SUMMARY

4.1.1 The application Site, pre-development comprised predominantly modified grassland with dense and scattered scrub around the margins, and a wet ditch along the western boundary. Two native hedgerows with mature scattered trees ran along the eastern and southern boundaries. These will be retained and protected throughout the development. The baseline position of this Site was calculated to be **20.54 habitat units and 3.88 hedgerow units, with 1.86 watercourse units.**

4.1.2 The post-development plans for the Site include the planting of higher quality habitat (i.e. – wildflower grassland, wet meadow grassland, woodland and scattered trees), which accounts for the majority of the post development score.

4.1.3 The assessment above indicates that the development proposals for the Site will deliver a net gain of **24.82%** for habitats. The change in habitat units onsite within the proposals result in an overall gain of **5.10** units, and Trading Rules below have been satisfied. A summary screenshot from the calculator tool is provided below.

4.1.4 The change in hedgerow habitat units onsite within the proposals result in an overall gain of **1.84** hedgerow units (**47.33%**).

4.1.5 The change in watercourse habitat units onsite within the proposals result in an overall gain of **0.20** hedgerow units (**10.88%**).

4.1.6 Proposed habitats include targeted conditions, and the score provided is based on the delivery of habitats that meet the criteria for these conditions. To ensure the targeted condition criteria for created habitats are met, it is recommended that a Landscape Ecology and Management Plan be produced. This would detail the requirements for habitat management during the construction and operational phase of the proposed development.

4.1.7 It is recommended that the habitats be audited at various stages throughout the life cycle of the project, to ensure that the habitat units and conditions have been delivered as intended.

The Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric – Headline Results

Land West of Bilsham Road, Yapton

Return to results menu

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ⚠

On-site baseline	*Habitat units*	20.54	
	Hedgerow units	3.88	
	Watercourse units	1.86	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	25.64	
	Hedgerow units	5.72	
	Watercourse units	2.06	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	5.10	24.82%
	Hedgerow units	1.84	47.33%
	Watercourse units	0.20	10.88%
Off-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	5.10	
	Hedgerow units	1.84	
	Watercourse units	0.20	
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*	5.10
	Hedgerow units	1.84
	Watercourse units	0.20
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	24.82%
	Hedgerow units	47.33%
	Watercourse units	10.88%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	20.54	22.59	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	3.88	4.27	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	1.86	2.04	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

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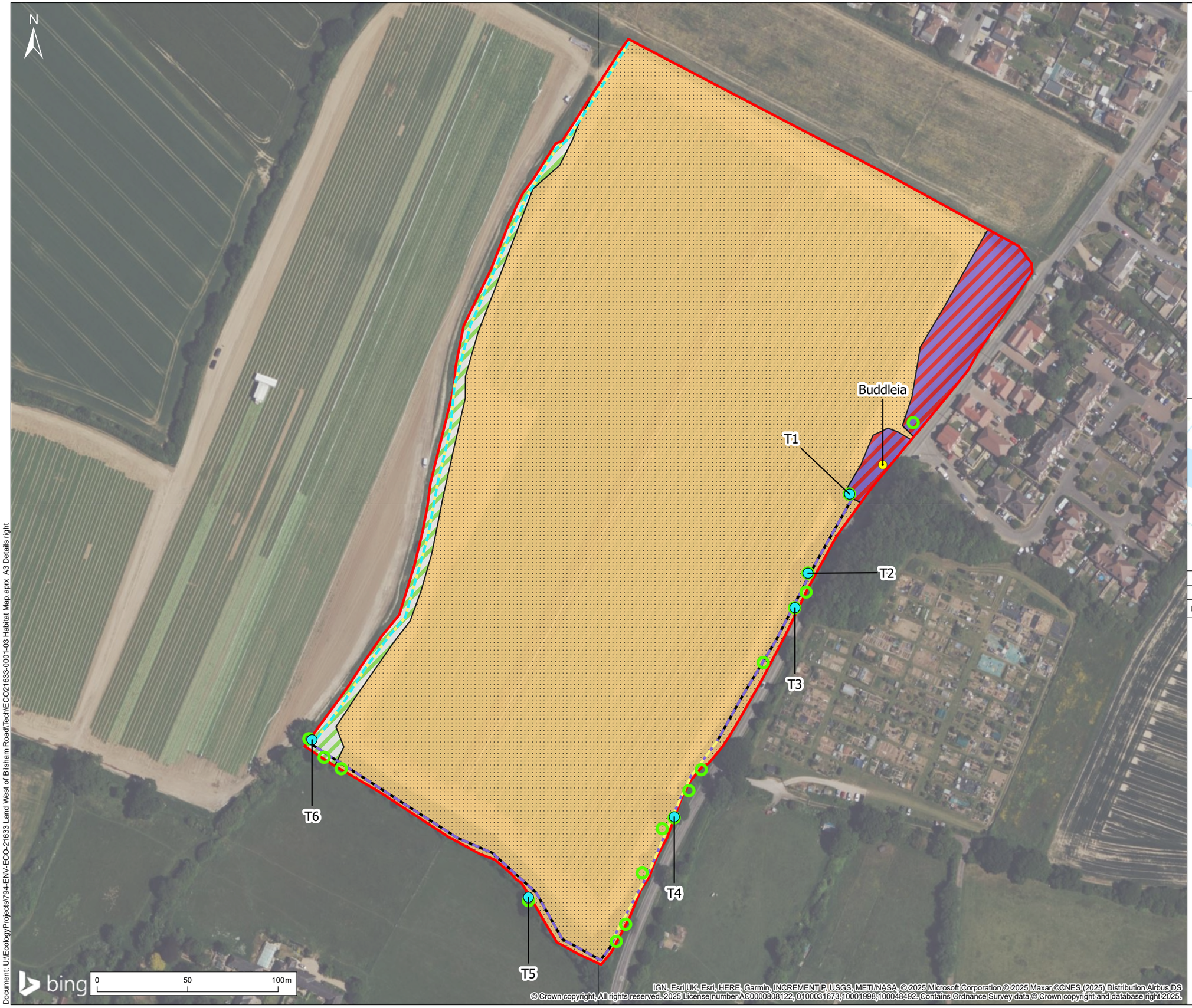
FIGURES

Figure 2.1: UK Habitat Plan - baseline



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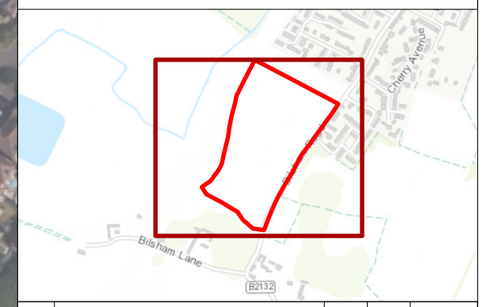
Legend

- Site Boundary

Habitat

- g4.517: modified grassland
- h10: scattered scrub
- h3 dense scrub
- h2.50 ditch
- h2a: native hedgerow
- h2a: Native Hedgerow, Defunct
- h2.200,203: individual trees within hedgerow
- Tree with bat feature
- Target note



Rev	Description	By	CB	Date

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Title: Habitat Map

Status	Drawn By	PM/Checked By
Draft	GNL	DL
Project Number	**Scale @ A3**	**Date Created**
ECO21633	1:2,000	01/05/25
Figure Number		**Rev**
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Figure 3.1: UK Habitat Plan – post development

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LEGEND

- Site Boundary

Proposed Habitat

- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Other woodland; broadleaved
- Vegetated garden
- Introduced shrub
- Mixed Shrub
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Native species hegde
- Ornamental hedge
- Ditch
- Urban tree

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Client **Redrow Homes Limited**

Project **Land West of Bilsham Road, Yapton**

Title **Post-development Habitat Map**

Status	Drawn By	PM/Checked By
FINAL	GNL/LP	DLS/EW
Project Number	**Scale @ A3**	**Date Created**
ECO21633	1:2,000	JUL 2025

Figure Number **3** Rev **01**

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Site Photographs

Evidence of damage to modified grassland, from heavy machinery access.

Section of defunct native hedgerow along the eastern boundary, H1.2.

Native hedgerow H2 along southern boundary.

Dense scrub present along the eastern boundary of the site, in the north-eastern direction.

Scattered scrub along western boundary.

Section of ditch, Ryebank Rife, running along the western boundary of the site.