

The Ageas Bowl: 5th Hole Motorway Acoustic Bund

Ecological Appraisal and BNG Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Summary of Proposals.....	1
1.3	Biodiversity Metric 4.0.....	1
1.4	Purpose of this Report	2
2	METHODOLOGY	4
2.1	Desk Study	4
2.2	Field Survey.....	4
2.2.1	Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey	4
2.2.2	Bats.....	5
2.2.3	Dormouse.....	6
2.2.4	Great Crested Newt and Other Amphibians.....	6
2.3	Biodiversity Metric 4.0.....	7
2.4	Limitations Constraints and Assumptions	7
3	RESULTS	8
3.1	Desk Study	8
3.1.1	Statutory Designated Sites	8
3.1.2	Non-Statutory Sites.....	10
3.1.3	European Protected Species (EPS) Licences	13
3.1.4	Local Species Records	13
3.2	Field Survey.....	15
3.2.1	Overview.....	15
3.2.2	Habitats.....	15
3.2.3	Bats.....	19
3.2.4	Birds	19
3.2.5	Dormice	19
3.2.6	Reptiles	19
3.2.7	Badger	19
3.2.8	Other Mammals	20
3.3	Biodiversity Net Gain	20
3.3.1	Baseline.....	20
3.3.2	Post Development	20
4	ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT, CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES	25
4.1	Designated Sites.....	25
4.2	Habitats	25
4.2.1	Scattered Broadleaved Trees	25
4.2.2	Other Neutral Grassland	25
4.3	Protected Species.....	26
4.3.1	Amphibians and Reptiles	26
4.3.2	Bats.....	26
4.3.3	Birds	26
4.3.4	Badger	27
4.3.5	Hedgehogs.....	27
4.4	Further Surveys Required.....	27
4.5	Opportunities for Enhancement	27
5	CONCLUSIONS	28
6	BIBLIOGRAPHY	29

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Johns Associates Ltd was commissioned by Hampshire Cricket Club Ltd in February 2023 to undertake an ecological appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of proposals to modify an existing artificial boundary bund associated with the 5th hole at Boundary Lakes Golf Club, SO30 3XH. The proposed works area is located towards the south of the wider Ageas Bowl site, to the north-west of the M27 Hedge End Interchange roundabout (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').

The Site has a central grid reference of SU48021341 and an indicative location plan is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Recent highways work resulted in the removal of all screening vegetation between Junction 7 and the boundary of Boundary Lakes Golf Club's 5th hole. This has resulted in a notable increase in vehicle noise, a visual impact and change in woodland character at this part of the course, and the removal of any safety benefits the previous mature vegetation provided. In addition, this vegetation removal creates a new gap in the perimeter vegetation which provides potential connectivity for dormouse.

Hampshire Stadiums Ltd are applying for planning permission to increase the size of an existing boundary bund, which will involve shaping and the importation of soils. The purpose of these proposals is to create a visual/noise screen for the adjacent Hedge End Interchange roundabout. The proposals will involve the loss of other neutral grassland and several broadleaved trees; however, most of the existing trees will be retained. Access will be provided by a temporary bridge structure to avoid construction within tree root protection areas and to avoid damage to the underground fuel pipe.

1.3 BIODIVERSITY METRIC 4.0

The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 uses habitat as a proxy for overall biodiversity within different habitat types. Habitats are assigned a value based on their intrinsic biodiversity value or 'distinctiveness', which is predefined for each habitat within the metric. This value is then multiplied based on the size, condition and geographical location of the habitat in order to ascertain its absolute value in 'biodiversity units'. Separate calculations are used within the metric for area-based habitats, linear habitats (such as hedgerows) and watercourses (including ditches and streams). These units are non-transferable and must therefore be considered individually for each project or development. Hereafter they will be referred to as "habitat units", "hedgerow units" and "river units" respectively. Collectively, they will be referred to as "biodiversity units".

DEFRA provides a Calculation Tool with all calculations built in to aid in the assessment process. This report should be read in conjunction with the Calculation Tool provided for the assessment of this Site.

Underlying this assessment process are a key set of principles which explain the intended use of the Metric 4.0. They are as follows:

- Principle 1 - The metric does not change the protection afforded to biodiversity, statutory obligations, or policy requirements. The use of the metric does not override the ecological mitigation hierarchy;
- Principle 2 - The metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidance and professional codes;
- Principle 3 - The metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice;

- Principle 4 - The metric's biodiversity units are only a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values;;
- Principle 5 - The metric is designed to inform decisions, in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input;
- Principle 6 – Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe;
- Principle 7 – Where practical and reasonable, created and enhanced habitats should seek to be local to the impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation;
- Principle 8 - The metric does not enforce a mandatory minimum 1:1 habitat size ratio for losses and compensation but consideration should be given to maintaining habitat extent and habitat parcels of sufficient size for ecological function.

During the process of undertaking a biodiversity net gain assessment using the DEFRA Metric 4.0, the following rules must be adhered to in order to ensure its proper use:

- Rule 1 – Competency requirements must be complied with;
- Rule 2 - Biodiversity unit values generated by biodiversity metric 4.0 are unique to this metric and cannot be compared to unit outputs from previous versions of the Defra metric or any other biodiversity metric. Furthermore, the three types of biodiversity units generated by this metric (for area, hedgerow and watercourse) are unique and cannot be summed;
- Rule 3 – The trading rules of this metric must be followed. 'Trading down' must be avoided. Losses of habitat are to be compensated for on a "like for like" or "like for better" basis. New or restored habitats should aim to achieve a higher distinctiveness and/or condition than those lost. Losses of irreplaceable or very high distinctiveness habitat cannot adequately be accounted for through the metric;
- Rule 4 – Losses and deterioration of irreplaceable or very high distinctiveness habitat cannot be accounted for through this metric;
- Rule 5 - Deviations from the published methodology of biodiversity metric 4.0 need to be ecologically justified and agreed with relevant decision makers. While the methodology is expected to be suitable in the majority of circumstances it is recognised that there may be exceptions. Any local or project-specific adaptations of the metric must be transparent and fully justified.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

An Ecological Appraisal and BNG report is required to support the planning application for the proposed changes to the existing bund to ensure compliance with national and local policy along with nature conservation legislation. It also feeds into and informs the adopted measures required to avoid/mitigate potential effects on ecological receptors and enhance the natural environment.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK STUDY

A desk study was undertaken to collate all relevant existing information relating to the Site and its surrounding area. The data was used to inform the scope of the subsequent site survey and to enable a full assessment of the likely effects of the proposed activities on any sites, habitats or species of conservation interest to be carried out.

As part of the BNG assessment, habitats are afforded different levels of strategic significance, which describes the local significance of the habitat based on its location and the habitat type. Strategic significance was determined using information from the local plan.

The following sources were used as appropriate:

- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Records and citations for designated sites¹
- NBN Atlas² Records of legally protected and notable species for the Site and the wider local area
- Google Maps³
- Ordnance Survey maps⁴ to identify any ponds within 500m of the Site, along with the presence of any significant barriers to the migration of great crested newt from these ponds to the Site itself.
- Historic data obtained from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) from late 2017 including the site and a wider 2km area considered to still be of relevance.
- Eastleigh Borough Council Local Plan⁵

2.2 FIELD SURVEY

An extended UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) was initially undertaken in May 2022 by Johns Associates' botanist and Senior Ecologist Katherine New and updated in March 2023 by Matthew Johns BSc MSc CEnv MCIEEM from Johns Associates.

2.2.1 Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey

The on-Site habitats were classified following UKHab (2020) guidelines, which provides a more detailed interpretation of baseline habitat survey data than previous habitat classifications systems, such as Phase 1 Habitat Assessments.

The professional edition of UKHab "UK Habitat Classification – Professional Edition" (UKHab-P) was used which includes Priority Habitat Types, all Annex 1 Habitats and the habitats listed in EUNIS. The classification of primary habitats is hierarchical with five levels, which include terrestrial/freshwater/marine, ecosystem types, broad habitats, priority habitats and Annex 1 habitats.

Habitat types were assigned a primary code to a hierarchical level of at least three, and secondary codes were used to further clarify the habitat and record additional information linked to the primary habitat such as habitat management. The full range of secondary codes following UKHab-P were used, which are grouped under the following headings of which the first three listed are considered mandatory sections:

- Habitat Mosaics (10 - 18)
- Habitat Complexes (19 – 32)

¹ www.gov.uk , www.designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk

² www.nbnatlas.org.uk

³ www.maps.google.com

⁴ www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

⁵ <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/11234/eastleigh-borough-local-plan.pdf>

- Origin (33 – 49)
- Management (51 – 85)
- Land Use (86 – 116)
- Environmental Qualifier (117 – 138)
- Species Feature (139 – 166)
- Hydrological Regime (167 – 199)

Green Infrastructure (200 – 1232) - The Green Infrastructure section is numbered from 200 upwards. As this section is hierarchical, the first level of the GI hierarchy goes up in hundreds (200, 300 etc.), the second in tens (210, 220 etc.) and the third in ones (211, 212 etc).

Where appropriate, maps are supplemented with target notes which provide specific information on habitats present that are too limited in extent to map at the scale at which data is presented, or the presence of species and habitats of ecological interest.

An annotated habitat map together with descriptions of the recorded habitat types was produced, which was subsequently digitized using a geographical information system (QGIS). The survey also included identification of any non-native invasive plant species. Flora taxonomy follows the nomenclature detailed in New Flora of the British Isles (4th Edition) (Stace C., 2019). Flora, where appropriate, are given a descriptive score of abundance using the DAFOR scale, as follows:

- D – Dominant
- A – Abundant
- F – Frequent
- – Occasional
- R – Rare
- L – Locally (to be used as a prefix for any of the above)
- V – Very (to be used as a prefix for any of the above)

2.2.2 Bats

Bat activity survey data exists for the wider Ageas Bowl and Boundary Lakes Golf Course Site from automated bat detector surveys in 2020 and previous years.

Habitat Suitability Assessment

The habitat suitability for bats was assessed as part of the extended UKHab survey. The habitats on Site were assessed for their suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The assessment was also contextualised through examination of suitable habitat and features in the wider landscape and possible flight-lines across the proposed Site following natural linear features such as hedgerows.

A preliminary ground-level roost assessment of the trees within the Site was also undertaken, looking for features that could support roosting bats, known as Potential Roost Features (PRFs), and evidence of bats such as droppings, scratch marks and urine staining.

The assessment followed the criteria described in Table 1.

Table 1: Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats based on presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016)

Suitability	Roosting Habitats	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on Site likely to be used by roosting bats.	Negligible habitat features on Site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions (a) and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential (b).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or un-vegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions (a) and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high importance/ value for the local bat population (c).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging eg trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions (a) and surrounding habitat.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

2.2.3 Dormice

Dormice are known to be present within a single localised part of the wider Ageas Bowl site following tube surveys undertaken in 2007/08 by Entec, in 2011 by Johns Associates and again in 2016-17 and 2019 (together with inspection of nest boxes). These historic surveys informed the planning application and construction delivery for the initial development of the Ageas Bowl golf course. Particular areas of habitat have since been managed to minimise impacts to dormice and to provide optimum habitat for this species. Such habitat does not exist within the proposed site for the modification of the bund – and has been removed from the off-site but adjacent highways land.

2.2.4 Great Crested Newt

There are no suitable water bodies that could be used by great crested newt (or other amphibians) outside the wider Ageas Bowl site within 500m. The seven ponds within Boundary Lakes and Telegraph woods, the closest of which is 250m to the north-west of the Site boundary, were negative for great crested newt (GCN) eDNA when they were sampled in May, 2020. As such it is considered reasonable to conclude there is a negligible risk of encountering this species and that no further surveys are required. The mitigation measures laid out in Section 4.3.1 will negate the risk of adversely affecting common amphibians.

2.3 BIODIVERSITY METRIC 4.0

The Site was split into distinct habitat parcels and linear hedgerow habitats based on the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab), which were then mapped and measured using the ArcGIS mapping tool. Habitats can be seen in Figure 2.

The area or length of each habitat type was entered into the Calculation Tool along with the condition and strategic significance (informed by the desk study) in order to obtain the baseline (i.e. existing) value of each in biodiversity units. This process was repeated for the post-development habitats to be retained, enhanced and/or newly created. Corresponding maps can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, and full condition assessment results are provided in Appendix B.

No hedgerows or river habitats are present within the Site therefore they will not be considered further in this assessment.

2.4 LIMITATIONS CONSTRAINTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The findings of this report are valid at the time of writing (May 2023). Should there be delays to the project timetable and/or implementation of the proposed development, updated desk study and/or survey work may be required. In this instance, advice should be sought to ensure the data, recommendations and conclusions set out in this report remain valid.

It has been assumed that the development proposals are as described in this document and that all proposed mitigation, enhancement and management measures will be implemented in full.

Habitat condition assessments were undertaken as a desk-based task, using the detailed notes and photos taken during the field survey, rather than on Site due to timing constraints.

No other limitations or constraints with regard to the field survey or desk study were encountered and therefore the therefore the conclusions and recommendations within this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are considered valid.

3 RESULTS

3.1 DESK STUDY

3.1.1 Strategic Significance

The Site adjoins an area of high strategic significance, the Cricket Ground, which has been identified in the Eastleigh Borough local plan as providing priority biodiversity links. The habitats on Site have therefore been assigned medium strategic significance.

3.1.2 Statutory Designated Sites

There are seven statutory designated sites within 5 km of the Site boundary. Details are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Statutory Designated Sites within 5 km of the Site and predicted impacts

Site Name	Distance from Site	Description/Reason for Designation	Potential Impact
River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	3.3km north-west	The Site and comprises classic chalk stream and river, fen meadow, flood pasture and swamp habitats. Significant populations of the nationally-rare southern damselfly <i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i> and assemblages of nationally-rare and scarce freshwater and riparian invertebrates, mammals, freshwater fish and breeding birds.	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Moorgreen Meadows SSSI	1.6km north-east	The site is notified for neutral meadows and alder <i>Alnus</i> wood along a small tributary of the River Hamble. The sward comprises at least 17 co-dominant herbs and grasses and is of exceptional scientific importance for the populations of marsh orchids.	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI	4.2km south-east	Located approximately 2.6km south-east of the Site, this SSSI comprises the uppermost section of the estuary of the River Hamble and its flanking zones of saltmarsh, reedswamp and ancient semi-natural woodland. Twelve types of ancient broad-leaved woodland occur in the SSSI and collectively comprise one of the most ecologically diverse woodland areas in central southern England comprising flora, invertebrates and birds.	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Solent & Southampton Water SSSI, Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar	2.9km south-east	This site is notified for saltmarsh, reedswamp, ancient semi-natural woodland and mudflat habitats. A variety of water bird assemblage during breeding and over-winter. It also supports an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates. At least 33 British Red Data Book invertebrates and at least eight British Red Data Book plants are represented on site.	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Solent Maritime SAC	2.9km south-east	The Natura 2000 Standard Data Form for the Solent Maritime SAC gives the qualifying features of interest as:	None – works will have no impact on the statutory

Site Name	Distance from Site	Description/Reason for Designation	Potential Impact
		Annex I Habitats that are a Primary Reason for Site Selection; Estuaries, <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>), Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>).	designated site.
Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes SSSI	4.4km south-east	This site is located approximately 4.4km south of the Site and comprises mature saltmarsh on the west bank of the River Hamble estuary. The marshes are elevated to about HWMST and dissected by complex patterns of drainage creeks. The saltmarsh vegetation is dominated by sea purslane <i>Halimione portulacoides</i> and common cord-grass <i>Spartina anglica</i> .	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.

Eight statutory Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are also present within 5km of the Site. Details of these are shown in

Table 3: Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) within 5km of the Site and predicted impacts

Site Name	Reason for Designation	Distance from Site	Potential Impact
Wildern LNR	This urban fringe site features a mosaic of wetland habitats linked by streams, including ponds, flooded meadows, woodlands and a valley mire, providing important habitats for birds and invertebrate species.	0.3km south-east	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Chessel Bay LNR	Only remaining long stretch of undeveloped, natural shoreline in the lower Itchen river; composed of a narrow strip of woodland, a parallel strip of shingle and salt-marsh (containing iris, sea club rush <i>Bolboschoenus maritimus</i> , reeds and sea asters), and mudflats, which at low tide provide feeding grounds for wading birds and wildfowl.	3.8km west	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Hackett's Marsh LNR	The meadows are species-rich and support large hybrid heath spotted orchid populations, meadow thistle <i>Cirsium dissectum</i> , cory fruited water dropwort <i>Oenanthe pimpinelloides</i> , devils-bit scabious <i>Succisa pratensis</i> and sneezewort <i>Achillea ptarmica</i> . The saltmarsh vegetation is dominated by cord grass <i>Spartina sp.</i> and saltmarsh grass with sea purslane, glasswort, sea lavender, thrift, sea aster, sea rush and sea club-rush. Supports nationally rare invertebrates and is an important feeding area for wading birds.	4.1km south	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Peartree Green LNR	Diverse range of habitats supporting notable plants, including pyramidal orchid <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i> , and invertebrate species such as marbled white <i>Melanargia galathea</i> and white letter hairstreak <i>Satyrus w-album</i> butterflies.	4.1km west	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Manor Farm LNR	A park with woodland, grassland and river habitats. Wildlife present such as roe deer, curlews, skylarks, wildflowers, insects and reptiles.	2.2km south-east	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Westwood Woodland Park LNR	Ancient woodland and grassland covering 150 acres.	4.1km south-west	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Netley Common LNR	Open heathland including grassland with islands of scrub and gorse, surrounded by a mixed woodland fringe.	1.5km south	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.
Miller's Pond LNR	Acid grassland, semi-natural woodland and pond.	3.5km south-west	None – works will have no impact on the statutory designated site.

3.1.3 Non-Statutory Sites

There 19 are non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the Site, all of which are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Further information is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Non-Statutory Sites located within 2km of the Site and Predicted Impacts

Site Name	Reason for Designation	Location and Distance from Site	Potential Impact
Telegraph Woods	Pasture woodland and wooded common. Areas of wooded/afforested heathland which retains significant remnants of heathland vegetation which would enable recovery.	SU47301380 0.2 km north	None –no impact due to small scale nature of works and distance from Site.
Hogsty Corner	Ancient semi-natural woodland and other semi-natural woodland which comprise important community types of restricted distribution in the County. Areas of wooded/afforested heathland which retains significant remnants of heathland vegetation which would enable recovery. Fens, flushes, seepages, springs, inundation grasslands etc. that support a flora and fauna characteristic of unimproved and waterlogged (seasonal or permanent) conditions.	SU48401320 0.3km east	As above.
West End Covered Reservoir	Grassland impoverished through inappropriate management but retains sufficient elements of relic unimproved grassland to enable recovery. Site supports one or more notable species. SINC qualifying Species supported: <i>Orchis morio</i> (Green-Winged Orchid).	SU47101362 0.5km north-west	As above.
Bridget Mary Garden	Other semi-natural woodland which comprise important community types of restricted distribution in the County. Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland.	SU48601280 0.8km east	As above.
Thornhill Park Plantation	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland. Site occurs occur in area otherwise deficient in conservation interest, and/or are known to be of particularly high value to the local community.	SU46671285 0.8km south-west	As above.
Harefield Copse	Woodland with significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving.	SU46701320 0.8km west	As above.
Shoreburs Greenway	Woodland with significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving and comprising important community types of restricted distribution in the County. Semi-improved grasslands which retain a significant element of unimproved grassland. Site supports one or more notable species. Sites occurs in area otherwise deficient in conservation interest, and/or are known to be of particularly high value to local communities. SINC qualifying Species supported: <i>Bembecia ichneumoniformis</i> (Six-Belted Clearwing) <i>Glyceria fluitans</i> x <i>notata</i> (Hybrid Sweet-Grass) <i>Misopates orontium</i> (Weasel's Snout) <i>Satyrus w-album</i> (White-letter Hairstreak) [S41] <i>Spergula arvensis</i> (Corn Spurrey).	SU45641153 1.8km south-west	As above.
West End Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland. Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving.	SU45801450 1.8km north-west	As above.
Sholing Common	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland. Site occurs occur in area otherwise deficient in conservation interest, and/or are known to be of particularly high value to the local community.	SU46141242 1.5km south-west	As above.
Hatch Grange Meadows	Semi-natural woodland comprising important community types of restricted distribution in the County. Semi-improved	SU46601490 1.8km north-west	None –no impact due to

Site Name	Reason for Designation	Location and Distance from Site	Potential Impact
	grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland.		small scale nature of works and distance from Site.
Netley Common, Southampton	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland. Area of heathland vegetation; including matrices of dwarf shrub, acid grassland, valley mires and scrub. Area of wooded/afforested heathland which are contiguous with, or form an integral part of an open area of heathland. Fens, flushes, seepages, springs, inundation grassland etc. supports a flora and fauna characteristic of unimproved and waterlogged (seasonal or permanent) conditions.	SU47551178 1.5km south	As above.
Dumbleton's Copse	Area of wooded/afforested heathland which are contiguous with, or form an integral part of an open area of heathland.	SU47601210 1km south	As above.
Windhover (Netley Common South)	Area of heathland vegetation; including matrices of dwarf shrub, acid grassland, valley mires and scrub. Areas of wooded/afforested heathland which retains significant remnants of heathland vegetation which would enable recovery.	SU47801140 1.8km south	As above.
Netley Common, Hound	Semi-improved grassland which retains a significant element of unimproved grassland. Area of heathland vegetation; including matrices of dwarf shrub, acid grassland, valley mires and scrub. Area of wooded/afforested heathland which are contiguous with, or form an integral part of an open area of heathland. Fens, flushes, seepages, springs, inundation grasslands etc. that support a flora and fauna characteristic of unimproved and waterlogged (seasonal or permanent) conditions.	SU47801180 1.5km south	As above.
Netley Hill Heath	Areas of heathland vegetation; including matrices of dwarf shrub, acid grassland, valley mires and scrub. Areas of wooded/afforested heathland which retains significant remnants of heathland vegetation which would enable recovery.	SU48001190 1.5km south	As above.
Peewit Hill	Area of heathland vegetation; including matrices of dwarf shrub, acid grassland, valley mires and scrub. Areas of wooded/afforested heathland which retains significant remnants of heathland vegetation which would enable recovery. Sites which support one or more notable species. SINC qualifying Species supported: <i>Schoenus nigricans</i> (Black Bog-Rush) [CR]	SU48101150 1.8km south	As above.
Moorgreen Woodlands	Ancient semi-natural woodland.	SU48601451 1km north-east	As above.
Piland's Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland.	SU48801170 2km south-east	As above.
Wildern Nature Park	Woodland with significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving and comprising important community types of restricted distribution in the County. Agriculturally unimproved grasslands. Assemblages of floating/submerged/emergent plant species, invertebrates, birds or amphibians. Fens, flushes, seepages, springs, inundation grasslands etc. that support a flora and fauna characteristic of unimproved and waterlogged (seasonal or permanent) conditions.	SU48901330 1km west	As above.

3.1.4 European Protected Species (EPS) Licences

There are five Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) licences within 2km of the Site. One of these licences is for dormice and was granted for the golf course refurbishment works within the wider Ageas Bowl site. The other four licences are for bats. See details in Table 5 below.

Table 5: EPS Licences issued within 2km of the Site

Reference Number	Species Affected	Licence Type	Licence Dates	Location from Site
EPSM2012-4209	Dormouse	Destruction of a breeding site; and Destruction of a resting place.	19/11/2013 – 31/10/2017	<100m north
EPSM2013-5805	Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Destruction of a resting place	24/04/2013 - 01/04/2015	0.5km south-east
2016-22944-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> ; and Common pipistrelle	Damage of a resting place; and Destruction of a resting place	17/05/2016 – 17/05/2026	1.2km north
2015-9288-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place	29/04/2015 – 22/04/2020	1.8km south
2019-42509-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle; and Serotine Epstesicus <i>serotinus</i>	Destruction of a resting place	05/09/2019 – 04/09/2029	1.9km, north-west

Thirteen ponds within a 5km radius have been identified as having great crested newts present through licence return data of these; eight are over 3.5km north, three are 4.5km south-east and one is 2.3km to the south-west.

3.1.5 Local Species Records

Amphibians and Reptiles

Table 6 shows all HBIC records of amphibians and reptiles from the last 10 years for the area extending 2km from the Site.

Table 6: Records of Amphibians and Reptiles

Latin Name	Common Name	Status				Location
		WCA ⁶	Habs Regs ⁷	SoPI	Hampshire BAP BAP ⁸	
<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Great crested newt	✓	✓	✓	✓	No records
<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Slow worm	✓		✓		48 recordings. Closest record 140m west of Site.
<i>Bufo bufo</i>	Common toad	✓		✓		1 record, 140m west of site.
<i>Natrix natrix</i>	Grass snake	✓		✓		1 record, 600m north-east of the Site.
<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Common lizard	✓		✓		2 records within the past 10 years, located 1-2km from the Site.

⁶ WCA: Listed on Schedule 1, 5 or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)

⁷ Habs Regs: Listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2011

⁸ Hampshire BAP: Denotes if the species is listed as a local priority species in the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan

Badger

Badgers *Meles meles* and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bats

All bat records supplied by HBIC are marked as sensitive and no additional information is given as to whether the record is a field record or refers to a roost. Records from the last 10 years only are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Bat records from the last 10 years

Latin Name	Common Name	Status				Location
		WCA	Habs Regs	Hampshire BAP	SoPI	
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Serotine	✓	✓	✓		7 field records, located within 1-2km of the Site.
<i>Myotis sp.</i>	Myotis species	✓	✓			8 records.
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Natterer's	✓	✓			1 record.
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Noctule	✓	✓		✓	12 recordings.
<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	Nathusius' pipistrelle	✓	✓			1 record, 1km north-west of Site.
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common pipistrelle	✓	✓	✓		32 records.
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Soprano pipistrelle	✓	✓	✓	✓	20 records located between 1 and 2km
<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Brown Long-eared	✓	✓		✓	3 recordings.
<i>Plecotus sp.</i>	Long-eared	✓	✓			8 recordings, including one within the wider Ageas Bowl site.

Hazel Dormouse

Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* is a European protected species. HBIC hold four records for dormouse within the 2km search area from the last 10 years. Of these,

Historic records within the landholding of the Ageas Bowl have been obtained from surveys carried out by Entec in 2007 and by Johns Associates in 2011, 2016-17 and 2019. These surveys revealed dormice presence in the copse of woodland to the north-west of the Site. Two dormouse nests were found within this woodland during January 2017, located approximately 0.2km from the Site boundary. However, there are no suitable habitats for dormice within the Site boundary.

Other Notable Mammal Species

HBIC returned 28 records of European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* from within 0.5km to 2km of the Site, some of which occur within 200m of the Site.

3.2 FIELD SURVEY

3.2.1. Overview

The Site is situated in the south-eastern corner of the Ageas Bowl Golf club, adjacent to the M27 and Hedge End Interchange roundabout.

A list of secondary codes used across the Site are described in Table 8.

Table 8: Secondary UKHab codes

Secondary Code Number	Description
10	Scattered scrub
11	Scattered trees
17	Ruderal
66	Frequently mown

3.2.2. Habitats

Please refer to Figure 2 for the UKHab Survey map.

g3c – Other Neutral Grassland – 10,17

Other neutral grassland was the main habitat on Site, dominating the existing artificial embankment (see Plate 1). The grassland has been seeded and supported a mixture of grass species, including abundant Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and occasional perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. Docks *Rumex sp.* were frequent throughout the sward. A species list for this habitat is provided in Table 9.

Scattered bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub and gorse *Ulex sp.* have colonised parts of the embankment and were dominant along the boundary fence line. Ruderal vegetation was also present, including locally abundant thistles *Carex spec.* and frequent wild teasel *Dipsacus fullonum* (see Plate 2). Tussocks of pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* and rushes were also occasionally present upon the embankment.

This habitat was subject to a condition assessment as per Biodiversity Metric 4.0 guidance. All other neutral grassland on Site was assessed as being of poor condition.

Plate 1: Other neutral grassland and bramble scrub



Plate 2: Ruderal vegetation



Table 9: Other Neutral Grassland Species List

Common name	Scientific name	DAFOR
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	A
Sweet vernal grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	F
Creeping bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	F
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	F
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	F
Perennial rye grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	O
Red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	O
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	O
Oxeye daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	F
Common vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	O
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	F
Lesser stitchwort	<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	O
Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	F
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	LA
Grass vetchling	<i>Lathyrus nissolia</i>	O
Common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	O
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	O

g4 - Modified Grassland - 66

The grassland to the west of the Site was species-poor modified grassland, associated with the wider golf course (see Plate 3). The sward has been maintained at a short even height by frequent mowing and was dominated by finer leaved grass species such as red fescue *Festuca rubra*, annual meadow grass *Poa annua* and perennial rye-grass.

This habitat was subject to a condition assessment. All modified grassland on Site was assessed as being of poor condition.

Plate 3: Modified grassland



11 - Scattered Trees

A small number of scattered broadleaved trees were present within parts of the Site (three trees adjacent to the existing green and a line of trees outside of the Site boundary). The trees included several mature oak *Quercus*

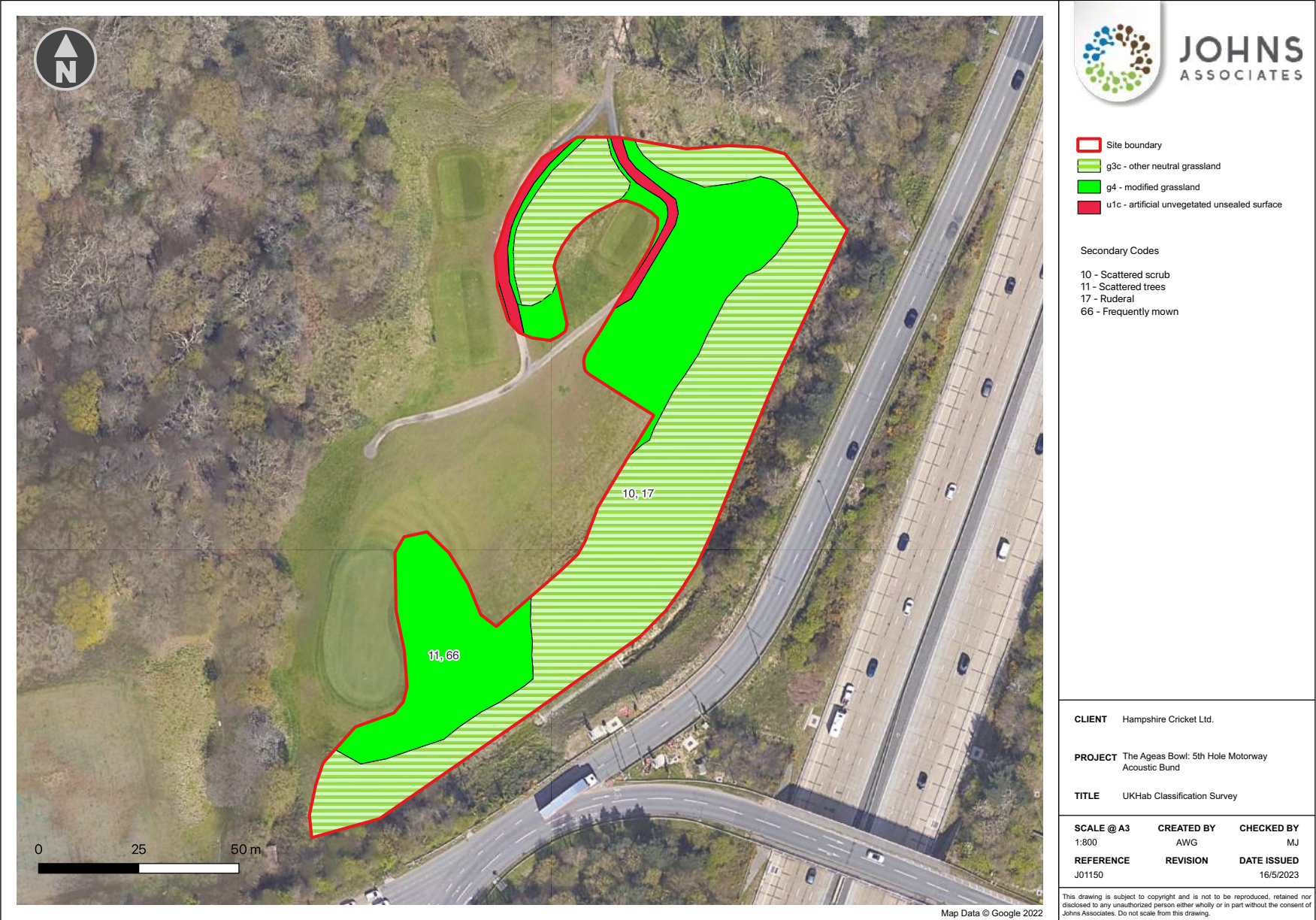
sp. trees, cherry *Prunus spec.* and silver birch *Betula pendula*. The ground layer beneath the line of trees was dominated by oak leaf debris, cut bramble, ivy *Hedera helix* and coppiced hazel *Corylys avellana*. The ground under the three trees on the edge of the green was highly managed modified grassland.

This habitat was subject to a condition assessment. All rural trees on Site were assessed as being of moderate condition.

u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

Unvegetated tracks are present forming access paths through the golf course. This habitat has no value for biodiversity and was therefore not subject to a condition assessment. The condition of this habitat is automatically set as 'N/A'.

Figure 2: UKHab Survey Map



3.2.3. Bats

All of the trees within the Site boundary were assessed for their suitability for roosting bats. None of the trees exhibited signs of decay or supported PRFs. They were therefore assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats.

The rough grassland and scrub on the embankment provide low value for foraging bats due to the presence of notable highway lighting adjacent associated with the M27 Junction 7 slip road and roundabout. The woodland belts within the wider land ownership provide greater value for both foraging and commuting bats. Previous transect and automated detector surveys by Johns Associates have recorded common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, serotine, Myotis species, long-eared species and Barbastelle bats commuting and foraging across the wider Ageas Bowl and Boundary Lakes Golf Course site.

No further bat surveys are required for these proposals due to the constraints caused by existing lighting and the fact that the small area of habitat will be restored and enhanced through the development proposals, including the likely decrease in on site light levels from the proposed bunding and planting.

3.2.4. Birds

The scattered trees and scrub habitats provide ecological value for birds, offering nesting and foraging opportunities, however these habitats are common and widespread in the surrounding landscape. There is a risk of disturbing active birds' nests as a result of tree felling and scrub clearance.

No surveys are required, however, mitigation will be required for this group as discussed in Section 4.4.2.

3.2.5. Dormice

The habitats within the Site boundary are not suitable for dormice and no signs of dormice were identified during the field survey. Historic surveys have recorded dormice within the adjacent copse of woodland to the north-west, within the wider Ageas Bowl and Boundary Lakes Golf Course site. However, this woodland will be unaffected by the proposals. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that dormice are not currently present within the proposed Site and no adverse impacts are anticipated. The proposed works in fact have potential to reconnect dormouse habitat opportunities and provide enhanced ecological value for this species. On this basis no further dormouse surveys are required and no adverse impacts are predicted. This species will not be considered further in this report.

3.2.6. Reptiles

The field survey was undertaken in Winter at a time when reptiles are unlikely to be active, therefore none were recorded during the survey. The Site provides a mosaic of optimal and sub-optimal habitats for reptiles including rough grassland and scrub-grassland interfaces which provide foraging and sheltering opportunities. A small number of slow worms and grass snakes have been recorded across the wider Ageas Bowl in historic surveys carried out in 2020. Results of the 2020 survey confirmed presence of slow worm, with the peak count per survey visit being six slowworms in seven different locations. Reptiles are therefore assumed to be present within the Site boundary. The short sward modified grassland is unsuitable due to the lack of structural variation in vegetation. However, the habitats on and surrounding the embankment, including rough grassland, ruderal vegetation and scrub, provide a range of important habitat interfaces for reptiles and offer opportunities for foraging, shelter and basking. There is a risk of harming individuals which may be present on the Site during vegetation clearance and re-profiling the bund.

No further surveys are required, however, mitigation will be required for this group.

3.2.7. Badger

[REDACTED]

3.2.8. Other Mammals

No signs of other mammals were recorded during the field survey. Considering the range of habitats present within the wider Ageas Bowl and Boundary Lakes Golf Course site, it is likely that a range of common small mammals including hedgehogs may utilise the Site for commuting, foraging and potentially nesting, including within the bramble scrub. Mitigation measures will be required for this species as laid out in Section 4.

3.3. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

3.3.1. Baseline

Table 10 details the specific area-based habitat types, their relative conditions and baseline unit values.

Table 10: Summary of Baseline Assessment for Area-based Habitats

Broad Habitat	Habitat	Distinctiveness	Area (ha)	Condition	Units
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	Medium	0.457	Poor	2.01
Grassland	Modified grassland	Low	0.308	Poor	0.67
Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	Very low	0.025	N/A	0.00
Individual trees	Rural tree (small)	Medium	0.0041	Moderate	0.04
Individual trees	Rural tree (medium)	Medium	0.0733	Moderate	0.65
Total			0.79 ⁹		3.37

3.3.2. Post Development

The following calculations are based on Landscape Master Plan drawing number J01188-MP-01 by Johns Associates. Table 11 details the specific area-based habitat types, their proposed conditions and biodiversity unit values.

The post development proposals for the Site comprise modification to and reshaping of the existing bund. An area of other neutral grassland will be lost to allow for creation of a band of mixed scrub, which will be planted along the back of the bund. Six new trees will be planted across the face of the bund. The remaining other neutral grassland will be enhanced from poor to moderate condition. A band of mixed scrub will be created. The three trees, adjacent to the golfing green, will be removed and an area of modified grassland lost to allow for creation of a golfing bunker.

Table 11: Summary of Post Development Assessment for Area-Based Habitats

Broad Habitat Type	Habitat	Distinctiveness	Area (ha)	Condition	Units
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	Medium	0.346	Moderate	2.59
Grassland	Modified grassland	Low	0.287	Poor	0.63
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	Medium	0.1103	Moderate	0.74
Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	Very low	0.0454	N/A	0.00
Individual trees	Rural tree (medium)	Medium	0.2199	Moderate	0.81
Total			0.79 ¹⁰		4.77

⁹ Total area excluding area of individual trees

¹⁰ Total area excluding area of individual trees

Headline Results and Trading Rules

As demonstrated in Table 12 below, implementation of the recommendations outlined above would result in an overall biodiversity net gain in area-based habitats. The trading rules have been satisfied.

Table 12: Summary of Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Unit Type	Baseline Units	Post-development Units	Net Unit Change	% Change
Area	3.37	4.77	+1.41	+41.8%

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

Where possible, all habitats of higher 'distinctiveness' have been retained. Where losses have been unavoidable, compensation and enhancements have been incorporated into the design in order to ensure compliance with Rule 3 and Principle 7 of the Metric User Guide. Table 13 demonstrates how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to all habitats on Site in accordance with Principle 2 of the Metric User Guide.

Table 13: Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

Broad Habitat Type	Impacts Avoided	Habitat Loss	Compensation Required	Details/Recommendations
Grassland	No	0.02ha loss of modified grassland	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	Enhancement of 0.35ha of other neutral grassland from poor to moderate condition.
		0.11ha loss of other neutral grassland to create mixed scrub	Same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required	
Individual trees	No	Removal of three trees	Same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required	Planting of six new native trees of moderate condition and medium size.
Urban	Yes	None	None required	N/A

Biodiversity units are more easily achievable when habitats are retained and protected during construction and thereafter enhanced through improved management practices or additional planting (Rule 3 of the Metric User Guide). Therefore, as per the mitigation hierarchy, the improvement of the distinctiveness or condition (or both) of the retained habitats should always be a high priority.

Table 14 below details the compensation and enhancement measures which will be implemented to achieve the net gain in habitat units stated in Table 13 above.

Table 14: Summary of Proposed Habitat Compensation and Enhancements

Broad Habitat Type	Proposed Compensation or Enhancement Measure	Target Condition	Delivery Details
Grassland	Enhance 0.35ha of other neutral grassland from poor to moderate condition	Moderate	In order to maximise the value of these habitats for wildlife the following management is recommended: - Sow seed mix in spring or autumn following instructions on the Emorsgate website (https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/general-purpose-meadow-mixtures). Leave grass, wildflowers and annual weeds to grow until early August, then cut and remove arisings. If any perennial weeds such as docks persist, dig these out. - To maximise the benefits to wildlife, the grass should be managed as per traditional hay meadow – with no cutting from spring through to July/early August. After flowering in July/early August, cut to 5cm, leave the arising to set seed for 1-7 days, then remove arisings. Grass can then be mown as desired to 5cm through to late autumn/winter and once more in early spring if necessary. In order to satisfy the criteria for moderate condition as per the Metric 4.0, the following must apply: - The appearance and composition must fit the UKHab definition of Other neutral grassland; - The sward height must be varied with at least 20% of the sward >7cm in height, and 20% <7cm; - No bracken or scrub encroachment should be allowed to establish; - No invasive non-native species should be present.
Heathland and Shrub	Creation of 0.11ha of mixed scrub to achieve moderate condition	Moderate	A band of mixed scrub comprising field rose, holly, gorse, common broom, silver birch and hazel will be planted along the back of the bund, adjacent to the eastern site boundary. In order to satisfy the criteria for moderate condition as per the Metric 4.0, the following must apply: - The appearance and composition must fit the UKHab definition of mixed scrub; - At least 80% of the scrub should be native, with at least three native woody species, with no single species comprising more than 75% of the cover; - The scrub must have a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat; - No invasive non-native species should be present and species indicative of sub-optimal condition¹¹ make up less than 5% of ground cover.

¹¹ Species indicative of sub-optimal condition for this habitat type may include: non-native conifers, tree-of-heaven *Alianthus altissima*, holm oak *Quercus ilex*, European turkey oak *Quercus cerris*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, snowberry *Symphoricarpos* spp., shallon *Gaultheria shallon*, American skunk cabbage *Lysichiton americanus*, buddleia *Buddleja* spp., cotoneaster *Cotoneaster* spp., Spanish bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica* and hybrid bluebells *Hyacinthoides x massartiana*. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site.

Broad Habitat Type	Proposed Compensation or Enhancement Measure	Target Condition	Delivery Details
Individual trees	Six new individual trees to achieve moderate condition.	Moderate	Six new trees will be planted across the face of the bund. The trees will reach a target size of medium (>30cm - ≤90cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)) within 30 years post development. Species to be planted include field maple <i>Acer campestre</i>, lime <i>Tilia europaea</i> and pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>. In order to satisfy the criteria for moderate condition as per the Metric 4.0, the following must apply: • The trees are of native species; • There will be little to no adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity); • The trees will retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height; • More than 20% of the tree canopy area will oversail vegetation beneath.

Figure 3: Proposed Landscaping Plan



4. ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT, CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.2. DESIGNATED SITES

The Site is not associated with a statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. The nearest statutory designated site is Wildern LNR, which is located at a distance of 0.3km to the south-east. No effects adverse impacts from the proposed works on the designated features of SAC/ SPA/ SSSI are considered likely, owing to the small-scale nature of the works and distance from the Site. No mitigation required.

4.3. HABITATS

The habitats present across the Site are common and ubiquitous across the county and the overall ecological value of the habitats are of site (low) value.

Based on the baseline survey results, the scattered trees and grassland habitats have potential to support several legally protected or conservation notable species, as shown in Table 11.

Table 15: Summary table of identified habitats and receptors within the habitats on Site

Habitat	Potential receptor
Scattered trees	Nesting birds and foraging bats
Modified grassland	Hedgehog and birds – foraging only
Other neutral grassland	Common reptiles, hedgehogs, common amphibians, foraging bats, foraging badgers and foraging birds

4.3.1. Scattered Broadleaved Trees

Tree root protection fencing will be erected around the perimeter of the root protection area (RPA) of retained trees within the working area/access route to prevent damage to the trees during construction. Any works proposed within the RPAs will be strictly 'no dig' construction or change in levels, as appropriate, within the root protection zones to ensure the protection of important retained trees.

The three trees associated with the green will need to be removed and the deadwood retained along the site boundary to provide a resource for invertebrates, small mammals and common reptiles and amphibians.

Six native trees will be planted on the face of the new bund to provide increased biodiversity value, provide additional visual/landscape features for the 5th hole, additional safety, noise attenuation and habitat. Species to be planted will include the following species: pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, small leaved lime *Tilia x europaea* and field maple *Acer campestre*.

4.3.2. Other Neutral Grassland

The grassland and associated ruderal vegetation and scrub habitats have potential to support common reptiles and small mammals including hedgehogs. The two-stage clearance method described in Section 4.4.1 below will avoid the potential for adverse impacts to these species.

The golf course facing parts of the bund will be seeded with an ecological rough and wildflower meadow seed mix (see Figure 3) to be mown once a year in September. Species to be planted will include the following: common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, crested dogstail *Cynosaurus cristatus*, slender creeping red-fescue *Festuca rubra*, smaller cat's-tail *Phleum bertolonii* and smooth-stalked meadow grass *Poa pratensis* (see Landscape Plan (Figure 3) for full species lists).

4.4. PROTECTED SPECIES

4.4.1. Amphibians and Reptiles

The proposed works will result in the temporary loss of potential amphibian and reptile habitat due to the clearance of rough grassland, ruderal vegetation and scrub. To avoid adverse impacts to amphibians and reptiles, a non-licensable Method Statement should be implemented, to include the following:

To reduce the risk of encountering and potentially harming any hibernating reptiles/amphibians, the vegetation to be cleared on Site should not be subject to disturbance during the herptile hibernation period, which runs approximately from October to February. Instead, clearance should be undertaken from March to September within the active period for these species.

A two-stage and directional vegetation clearance approach should be adopted to encourage any reptiles or amphibians that may be present within the Site to move out of the works area. Under ecological supervision the area will first be cut using trimmers/brush cutter with arisings removed, in a directional manner towards the site margins and to approximately 150mm in order to encourage any reptiles present to move out of the area. This will be followed by an inspection from the supervising ecologist to ensure no potential refugia have been revealed during the first cut. Refugia will be dismantled by hand and destructively searched. In the unlikely event that amphibians or reptiles are observed attempts will be made to catch the animal and relocate to a suitable adjacent habitat.

The area will then be subsequently cut to 0-10mm and allowed to rest overnight to allow any animals remaining in the area to move into retained adjacent habitats. A further inspection of the area will follow to further ensure no amphibians or reptiles (or other small mammals) are present within the area and that no possible refugia for amphibians or reptiles (such as small mammal burrows) have been uncovered. The topsoil will then be removed using mechanical excavation under ecological supervision where required.

A refugium/hibernaculum will be constructed along the boundary using the retained wood from the three trees to be removed on the edge of the green, to enhance the Site for these species.

4.4.2. Bats

No adverse impacts to bats are anticipated as a result of the proposed works. The trees proposed to be felled do not provide any PRFs that could be utilised by roosting bats. The loss of these trees is not considered to adversely affect foraging bats. The proposed new tree and mixed scrub planting on the bund will provide new foraging opportunities for bats and restore linear connectivity for commuting bats.

4.4.3. Birds

The proposed works may result in the direct loss of, or disturbance, to nesting birds. Felling of trees and clearance of scrub will result in the loss of foraging and potential nesting sites that could be utilised during the breeding season.

It is an offence under UK legislation to willfully destroy or damage the nest of a wild bird while it is being built or is in use in any location (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the CROW Act 2000).

To avoid direct impacts, tree felling will be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season which runs from March to August inclusive. Alternatively, if clearance is undertaken during the nesting period, checks for evidence of nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required immediately prior to commencement of works. If any active nests are found these will be protected by an appropriate buffer zone until nesting is complete and all the chicks have fledged.

The new bund and planted habitats will restore linear connectivity and new foraging and nesting opportunities over time.

4.4.4. Badger

4.4.5. Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs could use the rough grassland and scrub habitats within the Site for foraging, shelter, nesting and hibernation. Hedgehogs are of national importance and a species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006.

To reduce the risk of encountering and potentially harming hibernating hedgehogs, any clearance of scrub should be undertaken outside of the hibernation period. The two-stage clearance approach described above in Section 4.3.1 will make the development area unsuitable for hedgehogs and avoid the potential for adverse impacts to these species.

4.5. FURTHER SURVEYS REQUIRED

No further surveys are required. It is considered that sufficient information has been obtained to fully assess the potential effects and recommend mitigation and enhancements.

4.6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

The landscaping proposals include a band of mixed scrub planting with species including field rose, holly, gorse, common broom, silver birch and hazel. The scrub planting in addition to enhancement of the other neutral grassland from poor to moderate condition will compensate for the loss of modified grassland proposed to facilitate construction of the new golf bunker.

The new bund and planted habitat will provide enhanced ecological value for nesting birds, foraging and commuting bats and dormice by restoring linear habitat connectivity.

The following enhancements will also be incorporated into the development:

- Two pairs of Schwegler 1b hole nest boxes will be installed on trees in the adjacent woodland to the north-west (see Figure 3);
- Reptile hibernaculum constructed along the boundary (see Section 4.3.1 and Figure 3).

5. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the desk and field survey, and the integrated mitigation and enhancement opportunities being implemented, and the outcome of the BNG assessment, it is reasonable to conclude that this proposal meets all national and local policy and legislative requirements. The scheme proposed will result in a biodiversity net gain of 41.8%.

6. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A - LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

LEGISLATION

Many species of animal and plant receive some degree of legal protection. For the purposes of this report, legal protection refers to: species included on Annex II of the Habitats Directive 1992 (Council of European Communities, 22/07/1992) , Schedules 2 and 5 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) , excluding species that are only protected in relation to their sale (see Section 9[5] and 13[2]) reflecting the fact that the proposed development does not include any proposals relating to the sale of species.

Legal offences associated with species listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in England and Wales include inter alia:

- Deliberate capture, injury or killing of animals or taking or destroying their eggs;
- Deliberately disturb animals in a way that would significantly affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, breed or rear young;
- Intentional or reckless disturbance of an animal in its place of shelter or protection;
- Damaging or destroying a resting place or breeding site;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructing access to a place of shelter or protection; and
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead animal or any part of an animal.

Relevant species listed on these Schedules that are potentially associated with this Site include bats and reptile species (e.g. slow worm). All species of bat receive full protection from all legal offences listed above. Common reptile species receive partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act in that they are protected from killing and injury only.

All species of wild bird are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) from killing or injury. In addition, it is an offence to take or damage/ destroy their eggs and to damage or destroy a nest whilst it is in use. Species listed on Schedule 1 (such as barn owl) receive additional protection in that it is illegal to disturb birds or their young whilst occupying, or near to, an active nest.

A number of wild plants, habitats and animals (including reptiles, hedgehog and most species of bat) are also included within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 which lists flora, fauna and habitats considered by the Secretary of State to be of principal importance for conserving biodiversity. The publication of the "England Biodiversity List" satisfies the requirements of Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 for the conservation of biodiversity. Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 requires public bodies, including local planning authorities, to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (UK Government, 1992) which makes it an offence to willfully kill, injure or take (or attempt to kill, injure or take) a badger; or to disturb badgers whilst occupying their setts.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

There are numerous national and local planning policies associated with flora and fauna (also referred to as biodiversity) that need to be addressed as part of the planning process. The Government has issued its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, which requires impacts to biodiversity to be minimised. Paragraph 181 of the NPPF applies the same protection to Ramsar sites as that conferred by the Habitats Regulations to SACs and SPAs. The NPPF requires development to apply the following principles (Paragraphs 179-180):

- Minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure;
- Identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity;
- Ensure that there will be no adverse impacts to SSSIs (such development would not normally be permitted);
- Ensure that there will be no loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- Where significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) adequate mitigation, or as a last resort compensation, must be provided.
- The NPPF and associated Planning Practice Guidance also emphasise the requirement for ecological networks and wildlife corridors to be created throughout the wider landscape (paragraph 179).

Planning authorities should follow key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity conservation are considered. Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation and complements the NPPF.

The Natural Environment Paper

“The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature” outlines the Government’s approach and vision for nature in the UK including protecting and improving our natural environment, growing a green economy and reconnecting people and nature.

Biodiversity 2020

A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services, are the country level strategies for England and builds on the natural Environment White Paper. It sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade on land (including rivers and lakes) and at sea. The priorities for action include a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation, putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy, reducing environmental pressure and improving knowledge.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

As well as national policy, there is relevant biodiversity policy contained within Eastleigh Borough Council’s local planning documents.

Current adopted policy for Eastleigh comprises the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001 – 2011) (adopted in May 2006) (Council, 2006). Saved policies 22.NC, 23.NC, 25.NC and 26.NC provide protection for SSSIs, locally designated sites and the overall wildlife network; and promote biodiversity conservation overall. In particular, Policy 23.NC states that:

‘Development which is likely to have a direct or indirect adverse affect on a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site. If development is to be permitted, the Council will require appropriate measures to be taken to mitigate for the adverse effects on the SINC.’

Emerging policy is set out in the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Proposed Submission Local Plan (Eastleigh Borough Council, 2018). This emerging policy should be taken into account as a material planning consideration. Policy DM11 requires development to achieve the following:

- Protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, national and local nature conservation designations;

- Assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);
- Protect, conserve and enhance networks of natural habitats and features, including the Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links identified in the Eastleigh Borough Biodiversity Action Plan 2012-2022, and watercourses and wetland complexes, woodland trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character
- On new development sites seek enhancement of biodiversity through the protection and connection of existing and provision of new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough.

Policy DM11 provides strong protection for locally-designated sites and biodiversity and states that:

'Development will not be permitted if it is likely to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve as shown on the policies map (or on a more recent plan provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre), unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council that:

- i. the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site;
- ii. the adverse impacts are unavoidable;
- iii. measures are taken to mitigate or, if this is not possible, compensate for the adverse effects, such that the development will result in at least no net loss of biodiversity; and
- iv. buffers free from development are provided to Locally designated sites within or adjacent to developments to alleviate recreational impact and impacts on edge habitats and to maintain dark skies.

Impacts on priority habitats and protected and priority species will not be permitted unless the applicant can evidence that:

- There has been thorough habitat and species surveys;
- There is an overall biodiversity gain;
- Protected species impacts have been avoided or mitigated and their needs taken into consideration within the development design;
- The great crested newt strategic survey and strategy have been considered in all developments within 500m of a great crested newt pond; and
- The strategic bat trapping survey has been considered in all developments within the locality of a woodland surveyed or connected habitat networks.'

Emerging policy is set out in the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Proposed Submission Local Plan) . This emerging policy should be taken into account as a material planning consideration. Policy DM11 requires development to achieve the following:

- Protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, national and local nature conservation designations;
- Assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);
- Protect, conserve and enhance networks of natural habitats and features, including the Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links identified in the Eastleigh Borough Biodiversity Action Plan 2012-2022, and watercourses and wetland complexes, woodland trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character

- On new development sites seek enhancement of biodiversity through the protection and connection of existing and provision of new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough.

APPENDIX B – HABITAT CONDITION ASSESSMENT SHEETS

Grassland (Low) Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
Site name and location	J01150 Ageas Bowl Motorway Acoustic Bund	On-site or off-site	On-site
Limitations (if applicable)	Condition assessment was undertaken as a desk based task rather than on site.	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	
Habitat Description			
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	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. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	N	
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.	N	
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. Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	
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.	Y	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y	
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			
Number of criteria passed			
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	X	
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Footnotes			
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			

Grassland (Medium) Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high and very high distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)			
Grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland Grassland - Lowland dry acid grassland Grassland - Lowland meadows Grassland - Other lowland acid grassland Grassland - Other neutral grassland Grassland - Tall herb communities (H6430) [Note Tall herb habitat that does not meet the Annex 1 definition should be recorded as 'Other neutral grassland'] [Not to be confused with the Tall forbs secondary code – see UKHab guidance for details.] Grassland - Upland acid grassland Grassland - Upland calcareous grassland Grassland - Upland hay meadows			
Site name and location	J01150 Ageas Bowl Motorway Acoustic Bund	On-site or off-site	On-site
Limitations (if applicable)	Condition assessment was undertaken as a desk based task rather than on site.	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	
Habitat Description			
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The grassland is a good representation of the habitat type it has been identified as, based on its UKHab description - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches the characteristics of the specific grassland habitat type. Indicator species listed by UKHab for the specific grassland habitat type are consistently present. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	N	
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 insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	N	
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens ¹ .	Y	
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Y	
E	Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition ² and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	N	
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types			
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m ² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 2 and 4 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	N	

Non-acid grassland Types (Result out of 6 criteria)			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)		
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	X	
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Notes			
Footnote 1 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover. Footnote 2 - Species indicative of sub-optimal condition for this habitat type include: creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			

Individual Trees Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type														
Habitat Type(s)														
Individual trees – Urban trees														
Individual trees – Rural trees														
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.														
Please see separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of Rural trees.														
Habitat Description														
Rural trees														
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment):														
Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.														
Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only):														
Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies must overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.														
Site name and location	J01150 Ageas Bowl Motorway Acoustic Bund		On-site or off-site	On-Site										
			Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)											
Limitations (if applicable)	Condition assessment was undertaken using as a desk based task rather than on-site.		Habitat parcel reference											
			T1	T2	T3									
Condition Assessment Criteria			Grid reference											
			Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)	
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).		Y	Y	Y									
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).		Y	Y	Y									
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).		N	N	N									
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.		Y	Y	Y									
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.		N	N	N									
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.		Y	Y	Y									
Number of criteria passed			4	4	4									
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score		Score Achieved x/✓											
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)													
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		X	X	X									
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)													
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.														
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score														
Footnotes														
Footnote 1 - See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from:														
Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk)														
and:														
Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)														