

Biodiversity Net Gain
Assessment
ATC Hedge End

South
Downs
Ecology

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Quality Assurance			
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Client:	The 2428 Hedge End Air Training Corps		
Disclaimer:	This report is issued solely for the commissioning party's use. Information and recommendations in this report should be considered only within the context of the current proposals. This document does not constitute legal advice. For legal matters, please consult a qualified legal professional.		
Report conditions:	The content is provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. The methods and recommendations in this report are based on the following: • CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017) • Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report & Audit Templates Version 1 (CIEEM, July 2021) • Natural England (2025). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.		

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1. Executive Summary

The following report has been compiled for proposals for new cricket nets and equipment store at the Portsmouth Cricket Club, Eastern Parade, Southsea.

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

The proposals of themselves could achieve a habitat area gain of 10.03%. To achieve the required 10% minimum, it is proposed to include enhancements such as the following, which will be secured by condition:

- Planting of 4no. new trees; and
- Enhancement of 0.023 ha of the poor grassland within the redline boundary to moderate condition

No hedgerows or watercourses are impacted by proposals.

The proposed enhancement/creation detailed above are not considered 'significant' and their planting and retention would not require a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan at the condition stage. The LPA can secure the gains via condition.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background and Site Description

The applicant, The 2428 Hedge End Air Training Corps has commissioned a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the proposed new footpath and movement of soil at the ATC Hedge End.

The habitats on-site consist of existing areas of modified grassland with the remainder being developed land in the form of existing paths. A number of urban trees are also present.

The site is not within or adjacent any designated sites, or Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). There are some *Areas That Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity* adjacent the site but not within the site.

No irreplaceable habitats are present on-site or directly adjacent to the site, and no degradation has occurred prior to this application.

2.2 Proposals

The proposals involve the installation of a new footpath to the site, as well as removal of a soil bank to the north and the spreading of the soil arisings on land to the south.

2.3 Scope of Assessment

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

3. Legislation and Policy

3.1 Legislation

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

3.2 National Policy

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

3.3 Local Policy

The site sits within the Eastleigh Borough. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 – 2036) includes the following relevant policies:

Policy DM11: Nature Conservation

General Approach:

The Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers, and will determine planning applications, to:

Protect, conserve and enhance all:

International, national and local nature conservation designations; and

Networks of natural habitats and features, including the Local Ecological Network, Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links, watercourses, wetland complexes, woodland trees, and trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character; and facilitate their adaptation to climate change wherever possible;

Assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);

Seek a net gain of biodiversity on all development sites (including sites for redevelopment) through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing and provision of new habitats and features of nature conservation interest compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough, having regard to local geodiversity and soils; and
Contribute to major elements of the PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy and other strategies for the provision and enhancement of multifunctional green infrastructure including green routes, ecological networks and biodiversity enhancements (see strategic policy S9).

International Designations

Development which is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to adversely affect the integrity of an international or European nature conservation site will not be permitted subject only to imperative reasons of overriding public interest and securing any necessary compensatory measures in the absence of alternative solutions. A ‘project level’ Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required where there are likely significant effects or uncertainty. Any mitigation measures required to ensure no adverse impact must be implemented at the appropriate time.

The Council will work with PfSH, Natural England, the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to develop and implement with developers a strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of international and European sites from the direct and indirect effects of development. Within Eastleigh Borough this will include:

Implementing:

The Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (requiring contributions from residential developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent Special Protection Area to the Strategy); and

The interim and any future New Forest Recreation Mitigation Strategy if required; or alternative agreed site specific measures to address recreational disturbance;

Preserving the water quality and flows within the Itchen and Hamble, Southampton Water and Solent;

Protecting the River Itchen SAC, in particular the maintenance and where appropriate restoration of habitats and qualifying species to favourable conservation status (as defined by article 1 of the Habitats Directive); and

Seek contributions towards measures set out in the Southern Damselfly Conservation Strategy (or other strategy) specifically to deliver biodiversity net gain.

National and Local Designations

Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as shown on the policies map (or on a more recent plan provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) unless it can be demonstrated that:

There are no alternative solutions;

The adverse effects are unavoidable;

Measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;

There is an overall biodiversity net gain; and

If there are any residual adverse effects which cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site and any broader impacts on national and local designations.

Priority habitats, protected and priority species and the local ecological network

Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on priority habitats, protected or priority species, or on the local ecological network unless it can be demonstrated that:

There are no alternative solutions;

The adverse effects are unavoidable;

Measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;

There is an overall biodiversity net gain; and

If there are any residual adverse effects, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on priority habitats, priority and protected species, and the local ecological network.

Irreplaceable habitats

Development will not be permitted if it results in the 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.

Buffers

Buffers free from development will be provided to designated sites to avoid/mitigate impacts, including recreational impact and impacts on edge habitats, and to maintain dark skies.

Surveys

Development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

There have been thorough habitat and species surveys;

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 or connected habitat networks.

Legislation

4. Methods

4.1 Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online resource was accessed on 8th January 2026 to search for Protected and Priority Habitats, or Habitats of Principal Importance listed under the NERC Act on-site or within 500.0m.

4.2 Site Assessments

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

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

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

Habitats were classified in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification System v2.01 (UKHab Ltd 2023) and assessed using Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric (2025). The classifications are illustrated on the Site Baseline Habitat Plan, produced using AutoCAD 2018. See Figure 5.1.

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

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

5. Results

The site is not situated within any Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), strategic wildlife corridors, or designated enhancement network zones. There are some *Areas That Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity* and a *Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)* adjacent the site but not within the site. Consequently, all habitats on-site are classified as having low strategic significance.

The northern area of grassland (modified grassland in good condition) is proposed to be excavated to reduce the bank height here. Whilst the habitat would be impacted temporarily, as a modified grassland it is considered that the habitat could easily be reinstated within 2 years by either retention of the turf or re-seeding. As such the habitat is considered to be retained.

5.1 Area Habitats

Baseline Habitats		
- o 0.032 ha of Modified Grassland, Good Condition (north) - o 0.026 ha of Modified Grassland, Poor Condition (south) - o 0.006 ha of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (small section of path) - o 0.0244 ha of Urban Tree (6 small trees), Moderate Condition		
Retained Habitats		
- o 0.032 ha of Modified Grassland, Good Condition (north) - o 0.005 ha of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (small section of path) - o 0.0204 ha of Urban Tree (5 small trees), Moderate Condition		
Proposed On-Site Habitats		
The following habitats are proposed as part of the development: - o 0.003 ha of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (new surfaced paths) - o 0.0163 ha of Urban Tree (4 small trees), Moderate Condition - o 0.023 ha of the southern Modified Grassland will be enhanced to Moderate Condition through reseeded with a shade-tolerant flowering lawn mix		
Habitats Summary		
- o The existing site has a baseline of 0.44 Habitat Units. See Figure 5.1. - o The proposals on-site will result in a gain of 0.04 Habitat Units (+10.03%). Therefore, it does achieve the mandatory +10%.		
	Total Net Unit Change	Total Net % Change
	+0.04 Habitat Units	+10.03%

Figure 5.1: Site Baseline Habitat Plan



Figure 5.1: Site Proposed Habitat Plan



6. Habitat Creation, Management and Monitoring

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

- Reinstatement of the norther modified grassland G4-1 within 2 years of commencement of works;
- Enhancement of the southern modified grassland G4-2 (0.023 ha) to 'moderate' condition, and
- Planting of 4no. new small trees, moderate condition

Both of these proposals are considered achievable and reasonable, and would not be considered 'significant' and as such, would not need to be secured through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. The proposed tree planting can be secured by condition and no legal agreement, monitoring schedule or charge are necessary.

7. Site Aerial



8. Site Plan

