



**Somerset
Wildlife Trust
Consultancy**

Boorley Green
Land at Oak & Apple Tree Cottage, Winchester Road
Boorley Green, Hampshire

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

August 2024

Document control sheet

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Executive summary

The site is located at Oak and Apple Tree Cottage to the west of Winchester Road, Boorley Green, Hampshire, SO32 2DH, centred on national grid reference SU 50468 14817. McCarthy and Stone Retirement Lifestyles Limited is seeking planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings on site and the development of a retirement facility with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy was commissioned to undertake a biodiversity net gain assessment of the site to confirm that the proposed design conforms to the biodiversity net gain good practice principles (BS 8683) and to calculate the difference in biodiversity units between the baseline and post-intervention habitats.

The baseline habitat assessment identified eight on-site habitat types. The on-site baseline scored 6.39 habitat units, 1.62 hedgerow units and 0 watercourse units.

The on-site post-intervention proposals scored 1.96 habitat units, 2.03 hedgerow units and 0 watercourse units.

The biodiversity net gain assessment confirmed that the proposed design achieves an on-site net loss of 4.43 habitat units, a gain of 0.41 hedgerow units and no change in watercourse units, resulting in a -69.30% habitat net loss and 25.23% hedgerow net gain using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculator tool. In addition, the calculator confirms that trading rules in relation to habitat and hedgerow units have not been met.

Works will be undertaken as follows:

- Implementation of tree protection, as outlined within the Tree Protection Plan (Keen, J. 2024).
- Production of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to cover a minimum of 30 years, including a monitoring and audit schedule.
- Production of a habitat management and monitoring report.
- Identification and enactment of an off-site solution to achieve the outstanding requirements of biodiversity net gain for the scheme, including 10% gain in habitat units and achievement of trading rules.

As the project develops, should any changes to the proposed design (either in relation to the redline boundary, habitat extent, classification or management) be required, this assessment will need to be updated, which may amend the net gain calculations. Further ecological consultation will be sought if the onset of the work is delayed by more than 12 months from the date of this survey as re-validation of the baseline habitats and hedgerows and/or condition assessments may be necessary.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Site location

- 1.1.1 The site is located at Oak & Apple Tree Cottage, to the west of Winchester Road, Boorley Green, Hampshire, SO32 2DH, centred on national grid reference SU 50468 14817.

1.2 Background to the activity/development

- 1.2.1 McCarthy and Stone Retirement Lifestyles Limited is seeking full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings on site and the development of 52 retirement living apartments with communal facilities and car parking, and a pair of semi-detached dwellings (Figure 1).
- 1.2.2 The site has previously been subject to ecological assessment in relation to the proposed development by SWTC (Appendix A), formerly trading as First Ecology:
- Ablitt, R. (April 2024). Boorley Green - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. First Ecology, Cheddar.
- 1.2.3 The site has also previously been subject to ecological assessment in relation to a previous scheme on behalf of Foreman Homes:
- Jessop, A. (2022). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Ecosupport, Lee-on-the-Solent.
 - Domblides, A. (2022). Phase II Bat Surveys. Ecosupport, Lee-on-the-Solent.
 - Domblides, A. (2022). Reptile Mitigation Strategy. Ecosupport, Lee-on-the-Solent.
 - Jessop, A. (2020). The Biodiversity Metric 2.0. Ecosupport, Lee-on-the-Solent.
- 1.2.4 Biodiversity net gain is embedded within the NPPF and in numerous local planning frameworks. Nationally, due to the recently enacted Environment Act (2021) (Appendix B), major, minor and NSIP developments (unless exempt) are required to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity as a mandatory element of planning applications since the 12th February and 2nd April 2024 (for major and minor applications, respectively), with a delay for NSIP applications until November 2025.
- 1.2.5 Pre-application consultation with the local planning authority in relation to the proposed works has been sought (Eastleigh Borough Council reference Q/24/97005). The response received from Nicholas Parker, Planning Manager, on the 17th June 2024 stated, inter alia:

“at least 10% biodiversity net gain will be required for the full application.

In terms of biodiversity net gain a Biodiversity Gain Strategy is required to assess the changes of all habitats pre and post development. It must:

- *Quantify the pre and post development biodiversity value of the site using the statutory Biodiversity metric with an explanation of the condition scores set out in the DEFRA guidance. Plans of the site pre and post development (and of any areas on which off-site mitigation or compensation is proposed) must be provided together with Excel copies of the completed relevant metrics to demonstrate how the metric conclusions were reached.*
- *Identify how at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved, ensuring that the proposed habitat is provided onsite in the first instance followed by either a combination of onsite and partial offsite or completely offsite.*
- *Demonstrate that the trading rules have been adhered to.*

- *Demonstrate that proposals have followed the 'mitigation hierarchy': avoiding habitat loss where possible; minimising the extent of negative impacts that cannot be avoided; restoring degraded ecosystems where negative impacts cannot be avoided or minimised; compensating for any residual negative impacts and ensuring at least 10% net gain.*
- *Demonstrate that proposals maximise the connectivity of the proposed habitat with habitat in the wider area to avoid fragmented or isolated habitat. This must maximise opportunities from other required green and blue infrastructure elements such as sustainable drainage (SuDS).*
- *Confirm how the proposed Biodiversity Net Gain habitats will be implemented, managed, maintained, monitored and funded for a minimum of 30-years.*

If habitat is cleared before an application is submitted, the baseline habitat value of the site will be taken to be its biodiversity value immediately before the carrying on of the activities, as per Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021."

- 1.2.6 SWTC was commissioned to undertake a biodiversity net gain assessment of the site to confirm whether the proposed design conforms to the biodiversity net gain good practice principles (BS 8683) and to calculate the difference in biodiversity units and therefore percentage net change between the baseline and post-intervention habitats.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The assessment objectives are listed as follows:

- Identify the baseline area habitat, hedgerow and watercourse types within or of relevance to the site, including irreplaceable habitats (Appendix C).
- Assess the extent, condition and strategic significance of all area habitat, hedgerow and watercourse features within or of relevance to the site.
- Identify local biodiversity priorities and identify opportunities for area habitat, hedgerow and/or watercourse creation and enhancement.
- Review the post-intervention design to identify the post-intervention area habitat, hedgerow and watercourse types, extent, condition and strategic significance.
- Identify the scope of works required to achieve the proposed design.
- Aim to achieve biodiversity net gain on-site wherever possible, with off-site contribution measures being considered as an alternative option only when on-site solutions have been exhausted.
- Aim to achieve equivalent or better levels of ecological functionality, and equivalent or improved replacement of area habitat, hedgerow and watercourse features are included within the proposed design, where possible.
- Optimise the location of new or enhanced area habitat, hedgerow and watercourse features to contribute to strategic priorities and the amenity value of the proposed design, where possible.
- Be additional by utilising the cumulative benefits of enhancements within the proposed design.
- Minimise the time-lags between losses and gains.
- Ascertain whether the proposed design conforms to the biodiversity net gain good practice principles (BS 8683).

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Baseline habitats

2.1.1 The survey was completed in accordance with best practice guidance:

- BRIG (2008, revised 2011). UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Priority Habitat Descriptions. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- British Standards Institution (2013). BS 42020: Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development. British Standards Institution, London.
- British Standards Institution (2021). BS 8683: Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain. Specification. British Standards Institution, London.
- DEFRA (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide. DEFRA
- DEFRA (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology. DEFRA
- UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0.

2.1.2 The site survey was undertaken on the 28th February 2024 by Charlie Fayers (Appendix D).

2.1.3 The survey involved a baseline habitat assessment following a combination of the methodology set out in the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab), and the methodology detailed in The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide and Technical Annex 1. Habitats were classified in accordance with The Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat types as listed within Technical Annex 1, following definitions set out within UKHab, Annex I Habitats for Natura 2000, EUNIS habitat type hierarchical view, WFD lake typologies or A Guide to Assessing River Condition.

2.1.4 During the survey a minimum mapping unit of 25m² for area and 5m for linear measuring was adopted. Where recorded, individual trees (those not counted within woodlands, orchards or hedgerows) that qualified under the 'Urban' or 'Rural' categories were recorded as point features, with the area attributed to the size class and condition being determined by the Tree Helper Tool within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. Only existing trees with a DBH of >7.5cm have been identified as individual trees in line with The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.

2.2 Post-intervention habitats

2.2.1 The post-intervention habitats were mapped using the Landscape General Arrangement plan prepared by terra firma Landscape Architects (Figure 1). Areas of post-intervention habitats were calculated by georeferencing the proposed site scheme plans using Arc GIS Pro v3.1.1. Proposed habitat typologies identified within the proposed general arrangement plan have been reviewed along with proposed species lists (Figure 2) and translated into the most appropriate habitat typology within The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.

2.2.2 Proposed trees have been set a target size of 'small' in line with The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.

2.2.3 Newly created habitats were selected for their biodiversity value, with consideration given to their suitability for the scheme and locality.

2.3 Distinctiveness

- 2.3.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool automatically assigns a distinctiveness category based on habitat type. For full details please refer to The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.

2.4 Condition assessment

- 2.4.1 A baseline condition assessment was undertaken on all area habitats, hedgerows and ditches, where present, in accordance with The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1. Each habitat feature was assigned a condition from 'good' to 'poor' based on a series of criteria defined by the broad habitat category as stated within Technical Annex 1 to identify variation in quality within each habitat type, rather than between habitat types. The condition assessments for area habitats and hedgerows were undertaken by Charlie Fayers on the 28th February 2024.
- 2.4.2 Post-intervention condition assessments have been completed by Robyn Ablitt (Appendix D). Consideration has been given to the habitat types listed within the proposed landscape general arrangement plan and planting strategy, professional ecological judgement on the achievability of passing condition criteria and following discussion and agreement with the landowner that the appropriate management will be enacted and detailed within the necessary documentation, such as a HMMP report.
- 2.4.3 Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment forms for both baseline and post-intervention scenarios have been issued alongside, and should be read in conjunction with, this report.

2.5 Strategic significance

- 2.5.1 A strategic significance was attributed to each individual area habitat polygon, hedgerow length and watercourse feature, relating to the type of feature, its spatial location at a landscape scale and presence of, or mention within, a published strategy, plan or policy. The options for scoring each habitat parcel in accordance with The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide are 'high', 'medium' or 'low', the descriptions for which depend on whether a Local Nature Recovery Strategy of relevance to the location of the site has been published.
- 2.5.2 The local policy and strategy review was undertaken by Charlie Fayers. In the absence of a published Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the site's location, the resources consulted included:
- HBIC was commissioned to conduct a search for statutory and non-statutory designated sites of conservation importance and ecological networks. Information was received on the 21st February 2024.
 - The MAGIC website was reviewed to identify habitat networks, habitats of principal importance and ancient woodland on the 8th March 2024.

2.6 Biodiversity Metric calculation

- 2.6.1 All data collected was entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool in order to calculate the baseline and post-intervention habitat and hedgerow units and the total net unit change. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool was completed by Robyn Ablitt.
- 2.6.2 Within the Calculation Tool, where necessary, some habitat parcels have been sub-divided in order to apply the differing post-development changes (i.e. one area of poor condition modified grassland at baseline may end up being partly retained (as that habitat type and condition), partly enhanced (to

either modified grassland in moderate/good condition, or to a grassland habitat of a higher distinctiveness) and partly lost (to a habitat of a different type)).

- 2.6.3 In addition to identifying habitat types and conditions in the post-intervention design, the phasing of the proposed works has also been considered within the Calculation Tool. In summary, for the purposes of this assessment, no time delays to habitat creation are acknowledged.
- 2.6.4 This report includes summary information from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. For transparency purposes, the full Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool excel document has been issued alongside, and should be read in conjunction with, this report.

2.7 Good practice principles

- 2.7.1 The assessment was completed in accordance with best practice guidance:
- Baker, J., Hoskin, R., Butterworth, T. (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain - Good practice principles for development – A practical guide. CIEEM, CIRIA & IEMA, Grosvenor Court, Romsey.
 - CIRIA (2016). Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice principles for development. CIEEM, CIRIA & IEMA, Grosvenor Court, Romsey.
- 2.7.2 The proposed design was assessed against the 10 good practice principles for development. The good practice principles review was undertaken by Robyn Ablitt.

2.8 Limitations

- 2.8.1 This report only addresses impacts in the remit of biodiversity net gain. Potential impacts on protected and notable species and habitats in accordance with other planning policy and legislative requirements are therefore not included within the scope of this biodiversity net gain assessment. This report should be considered in conjunction with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report, as set out in Section 1, and any subsequent ecological reports prepared for the site to ensure that all relevant planning policy and legislative requirements pertaining to species and habitats is adhered to during the works.
- 2.8.2 The baseline habitat survey was undertaken in February, which is outside of the optimum season for habitat surveys. It is therefore likely that certain species of flora (including potential non-native invasive species) would not have been detectable. The previous preliminary ecological appraisal report (Jessop, A) produced in 2022 and Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (Day, A) produced in 2022 have been reviewed in relation to previously recorded habitat typologies and species lists and as such, the February timing of the site visit is not considered to present a constraint to this assessment.
- 2.8.3 It should be noted that the accuracy of habitat area measurements is limited by the form of baseline data collection and resolution of development proposals plans. In this instance baseline habitat areas and hedgerow lengths have been calculated from the Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline Plan produced for the site (Figure 3) which was drawn using a combination of site survey and aerial imagery. The post-intervention habitats were measured by georeferencing the proposed landscape general arrangement plan produced by terra firma landscape architects (Figure 1) using GIS software (Figure 4). All figures were entered into The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool.
- 2.8.4 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool does not count the area of individual trees or green walls towards the total site area, and presents a secondary total habitat area that includes these. Therefore, the ground level habitat underneath the canopy of individual trees is recorded and counts towards the total site area. The same principle is applied to hedgerows and watercourse features which are recoded as a linear measurement within the hedgerow or watercourse tab only,

respectively, and as such a habitat area has been allocated underneath the hedgerow and watercourse features and counted towards the total site area.

- 2.8.5 Condition assessment conclusions for the baseline habitats are reached from a single survey visit to the site and a representative sample plot for each area or hedgerow feature and are therefore limited to the species diversity and management status of habitats present on that date. Given this, a passed condition assessment criteria relating to the absence of invasive species, as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), does not confirm absolute absence of such species within the site. Furthermore, given the difficulty in identification, where species of *Cotoneaster* have been identified within the site, as a precaution, it is assumed they are one of those listed under Schedule 9.
- 2.8.6 Condition assessment conclusions for the post-intervention habitats have been reached following discussion and agreement with the landowner that the appropriate management will be enacted and detailed within the necessary documentation. Should the plans change, this assessment will need to be updated.
- 2.8.7 Where a habitat is due to be temporarily lost and then restored in the same location back to its baseline habitat type and condition, within two years of the date of the initial habitat loss, the habitat has been entered into the metric as retained (or enhanced, where there is action to enhance the habitat) in line with The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.
- 2.8.8 Hampshire is in the process of developing a Nature Recovery Strategy, which will assist with the assignment of a strategic significance to habitat parcels, however it is yet to be published.
- 2.8.9 Watercourse units have not been assessed within this report as no watercourses or riparian zones of off-site watercourses exist within the site and, as such, no impacts are anticipated on watercourse habitats.
- 2.8.10 These limitations have been taken into consideration within this assessment.

3.0 Results

3.1 Baseline habitats

- 3.1.1 No statutory or non-statutory designated sites of conservation importance, inventory priority habitats or ancient woodlands intersect or adjoin the site.
- 3.1.2 The northwestern section of the site is mapped as a 'network opportunities' area on the HBIC Ecological Network Map (Figure 5). In addition, the majority of the site is mapped as a 'network expansion' zone on the National Habitat Network dataset (Figure 6). Whilst these zones indicate the potential for habitat creation and ecological network improvements, they do not infer a level of strategic significance to existing baseline habitats, nor do they list desired habitat typologies within this location.
- 3.1.3 Baseline hedgerows are considered to be ecologically important within the site and provide ecological linkage to other strategically significant locations. As such, and in accordance with the User Guide, these have been assigned 'medium' strategic significance.
- 3.1.4 All other habitats on-site have been assigned a 'low' strategic significance to reflect the lack of existing published strategies. Whilst traditional orchards have been identified at the site, these are not included within the priority habitat inventory mapping.
- 3.1.5 No evidence of habitat degradation which may otherwise reduce the baseline value of the site was noted during the survey, and the habitats present are consistent with those shown on historic aerial mapping.

Baseline area habitats

- 3.1.6 The habitat surveys identified that the site contains six area habitat types (Table 1, Photos 1-7, Figure 3).

Table 1. Baseline habitat type, condition and strategic significance.

Habitat type	Condition	Strategic significance	Photo
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	N/A - other	Low – area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	1
Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - other		2
Modified grassland	Good		3
Traditional orchards	Moderate		4
Vacant or derelict land	Poor		5
Individual rural tree	Moderate		6
	Good		7

Baseline hedgerow habitats

- 3.1.7 The habitat surveys identified that the site contains two hedgerow habitat types (Table 2, Photos 8-9, Figure 3).

Table 2. Baseline hedgerow type, condition, strategic significance and length.

Reference (Figure 3)	Habitat type	Condition	Strategic significance	Photo
H1	Native Hedgerow with trees	Good	Medium – location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy	8
H2	Native hedgerow	Moderate		9

Baseline watercourse habitats

3.1.8 The habitat surveys identified no watercourse habitats of relevance to the site.

3.2 Post-intervention habitats

3.2.1 For the reasons outlined in Section 3.1, all newly created post-intervention area and hedgerow habitats have been assigned a 'low' strategic significance.

3.2.2 Retained hedgerows have also retained their 'medium' strategic significance.

Post-intervention area habitats – retained and enhanced

3.2.3 An area of traditional orchard in the southeastern section of the site will be retained and protected during the development.

Post-intervention area habitats – created

3.2.4 The proposed development includes the creation of new artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, developed land; sealed surface, ground level planters, introduced shrub, mixed scrub, modified grassland, other neutral grassland, traditional orchards, vegetated garden and rural tree habitats (Table 3, Figure 4).

Table 3. Proposed area habitats within the post-intervention site (table continues).

Proposed habitat (Figure 4)	Condition	Strategic significance	Comments
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	N/A - other	Low – area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	New areas of permeable bitmac, permeable block paving, compacted limestone chippings and loose gravel.
Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - other		New areas of bitmac, flag paving, concrete block paving, buildings and walls.
Ground level planters	Condition assessment N/A		New raised beds within the growing garden.
Introduced shrub	Condition assessment N/A		New areas of ornamental planting.
Mixed scrub	Poor		New areas of native shrub.

Proposed habitat (Figure 4)	Condition	Strategic significance	Comments
Modified grassland	Moderate		New areas of amenity grass/lawn, including flowering bulbs.
Other neutral grassland	Moderate		New areas of wildflower grass.
Traditional orchards	Moderate		New orchard areas with fruiting trees, underplanted with wildflower grass.
Vegetated garden	Condition assessment N/A		New areas within private ownership of semi-detached properties. Not to be covered by the HMMP.
Rural tree	Moderate		New small rural trees.

Post-intervention hedgerow habitats

3.2.5 The current post-intervention scheme includes the retention of hedgerow H2. Whilst a new pedestrian access point will be created in the northern section, this is reflected within the assessment in terms of gaps as opposed to loss of length. Minor removals will occur at hedgerow H1 to widen the existing access road and create a new pedestrian access point, resulting in a minor reduction in length. New native hedgerows will be created within the site (Table 4).

3.2.6 Whilst the southern end of H2 will be located adjacent to new vegetated garden pertaining to one of the detached houses, given this feature straddles the redline boundary for the site, it has been shown as retained for the purposes of this assessment.

Table 4. Post-intervention hedgerow type, condition and strategic significance.

Reference (Figure 4)	Habitat type	Condition	Strategic significance	Comments
H1	Native hedgerow with trees	Good	Medium – location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy	Partially retained in existing condition.
H2	Native hedgerow	Moderate		Retained in existing condition.
NH1	Native hedgerow	Poor		New native hedgerows.

Post-intervention watercourse habitats

3.2.7 No watercourse habitats are present within the proposed development.

3.3 Biodiversity Metric calculation

3.3.1 The completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool excel document has been provided separately and must be read in conjunction with this report. A summary of the headline results of The Statutory Metric Calculation Tool is provided below;

Boorley Green, Land at Oak & Apple Tr		Return to results menu		
Headline Results				
Scroll down for final results ▲				
On-site baseline	Habitat units	6.39		
	Hedgerow units	1.62		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	1.96		
	Hedgerow units	2.03		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	-4.43	-69.30%	
	Hedgerow units	0.41	25.23%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
On-site net gain is less than target set ▲				
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-4.43		
	Hedgerow units	0.41		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-4.43		
	Hedgerow units	0.41		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-69.30%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
	Hedgerow units	25.23%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	6.39	7.03	5.07
Hedgerow units	10.00%	1.62	1.78	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
				No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
				No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

3.4 Trading rules

- 3.4.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool confirms trading rules relating to habitat and hedgerow units have not been met.

3.5 Good practice principles

- 3.5.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain good practice principles have been considered during the design of the proposed scheme (Table 5).

Table 5. Biodiversity Net Gain good practice principles assessment (table continues).

Principle	Project Outcome
Principle 1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision-makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.	The mitigation hierarchy has been applied throughout the biodiversity net gain design. Linear features forming the boundaries of the site will be retained, with only minor removals to facilitate access points. Avoidance of the loss of traditional orchard was sought where possible, but full retention has not been possible given the layout requirement of the new building and associated access. Losses have been compensated for within the boundary of the site where possible, including the creation of a new area of orchard within the post-intervention scheme. Biodiversity losses that have not been mitigated or compensated for will be offset using off-site solutions.
Principle 2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity – these impacts cannot be offset to achieve No Net Loss or Net Gain.	There are no irreplaceable habitats on site. It will therefore be possible to offset the biodiversity losses via a combination of on-site and off-site solutions.
Principle 3. Be inclusive and equitable Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to Net Gain. Achieve Net Gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible, and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.	Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy were engaged to undertake this assessment to enable the iterative development of the post-intervention proposals and have maintained channels of communication with both the client and design team from the time of survey commission. As an important community facility, the future usage of the site has been considered within the scheme design to deliver biodiversity net gains where feasible, while ensuring the long-term benefits of the project as a space for the community.
Principle 4. Address risks Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving Net Gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.	Risks and uncertainty, from amenity usage and the small relative size of habitat parcels have been considered when assigning realistic condition targets. Target conditions have generally been set at ‘poor’ or ‘moderate’ to reflect this, although with a good management regime, realised conditions of some habitats may exceed these targets.
Principle 5. Make a measurable Net Gain contribution Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.	The proposed design achieves a 25.23% gain in hedgerow units on site. Whilst the on-site proposals result in a 69.30% net loss in habitat units, an off-site solution will be secured post-consent to achieve a 10% net gain as a result of the scheme.

Principle	Project Outcome
Principle 6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly-justified choices when: • Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses • Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation • Achieving Net Gain locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels • Enhancing existing or creating new habitat • Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity	The proposed design has considered the constraints of the location and relatively small size of the site and has strived to provide habitats with biodiversity interest. A new area of traditional orchard is proposed in keeping with the existing habitats present at the site. New tree planting will comprise both native and non-native species which will benefit birds and pollinators; new mixed scrub planting will provide interest for pollinators and other invertebrates; and the new other neutral grassland will provide interest to a variety of invertebrates and small mammals. The existing connectivity offered by hedgerows will be retained as a result of the development. The calculator confirms that trading rules in relation to habitat and hedgerow units have not been met. Due to the requirement to seek an off-site solution to achieve 10% net gain in habitat units and satisfy trading rules, there is the intention to contribute towards nature conservation priorities at a local level.
Principle 7. Be additional Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).	The 25.23% gain in hedgerow units is in excess of current national planning policy and legislative requirements. Nature conservation outcomes have not been exceeded in relation to area based habitats.
Principle 8. Create a Net Gain legacy Ensure Net Gain generates long-term benefits by: • Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure Net Gain in perpetuity • Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management • Designing Net Gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change • Mitigating risks from other land uses • Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another • Supporting local-level management of Net Gain activities	The proposals have been designed to enable biodiversity to be resilient to external factors and include a greater diversity of habitat types in comparison to the baseline scenario. The HMMP, which will be secured via condition, will include regular audits of the operational site to ensure that the habitat creation and enhancement proceeds as expected. If any issues are encountered, then remedial action will be taken to correct the management practices or to seek an alternative method of delivery.
Principle 9. Optimise sustainability Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy	The habitats selected for creation are abundant locally. The increase in number of fruiting trees and creation of higher distinctiveness grassland habitat at the site will provide wider environmental benefits.

Principle	Project Outcome
Principle 10. Be transparent Communicate all Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders	The completed Statutory Metric Calculation Tool excel document and condition assessment forms have been provided in association with this report for full transparency. All relevant information and processes have been and will continue to be shared with all of the project stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes.

4.0 Management and monitoring

4.1 Project implementation

- 4.1.1 The landscape design for the site is proposed to be implemented in line with conditions set in the anticipated decision notice and will be funded by the client.

4.2 Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan

- 4.2.1 The habitats and conditions specified in the proposed design will be secured for a minimum of 30 years by means of planning condition. The condition should require the creation, management and monitoring of these habitats to be specified by a suitably qualified ecologist and detailed within the HMMP for the site. This document will specify:

- Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- Aims and objectives of management.
- Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- Prescriptions for management actions.
- Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward).
- Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- On-going monitoring and remedial measures, including:
 - A schedule of monitoring with visits, which is expected to detail monitoring in years 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 30, to cover a total of 30 years.
 - Remedial actions to be undertaken if habitats fail the required conditions criteria to achieve their target values.
 - Audits to be undertaken immediately following project completion, and at suitable intervals to be informed by the “Final time to target condition” column in the Statutory Metric calculator and discussion with Hampshire Council.

4.3 Protected species recommendations / method statements

- 4.3.1 Protected species recommendations and/or method statements as set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (Ablitt, R. 2024), and any follow-up ecological assessment reports, must be enacted in conjunction with the HMMP.

4.1 Assessment updates

- 4.1.1 As the project develops, should any changes to the proposed design (either in relation to the redline boundary, habitat extent, classification and/or management) occur, this assessment will need to be updated, which may amend the net gain calculations.
- 4.1.2 Further ecological consultation will be sought if the onset of the work is delayed by more than 12 months from the date of this survey as re-validation of the baseline habitats and/or condition assessment may be necessary.

5.0 References and bibliography

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- 5.1.15 Jessop, A. (2022). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Ecosupport, Lee-on-the-Solent.
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- 5.1.18 Rose, F. (2006). The Wild Flower Key. Penguin Random House Children's UK. ISBN: 9780723251750.
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- 5.1.20 Woodland Trust (2008). Ancient Tree Guide 4 – What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest? Woodland Trust, Lincolnshire.

5.2 Websites

- 5.2.1 awt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5cc11efcac3e448aa7e9ef2067b571a1
- 5.2.2 earth.google.com/web
- 5.2.3 gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-metric-calculate-the-biodiversity-net-gain-of-a-project-or-development#using-the-metric-tool
- 5.2.4 gridreferencefinder.com
- 5.2.5 jncc.gov.uk
- 5.2.6 magic.defra.gov.uk
- 5.2.7 naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com

6.0 Photographs



Photo 1. The artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface in the eastern section of the site.



Photo 2. An area of developed land; sealed surface.



Photo 3. The modified grassland located across the site.



Photo 4. The traditional orchard located in the centre of the site.



Photo 5. The vacant or derelict land in the centre of the site.



Photo 6. An individual hazel coppice rural tree in moderate condition.



Photo 7. Individual rural trees in good condition.



Photo 8. H1, a native hedgerow with trees in good condition.



Photo 9. H2, a native hedgerow in moderate condition.

No photo







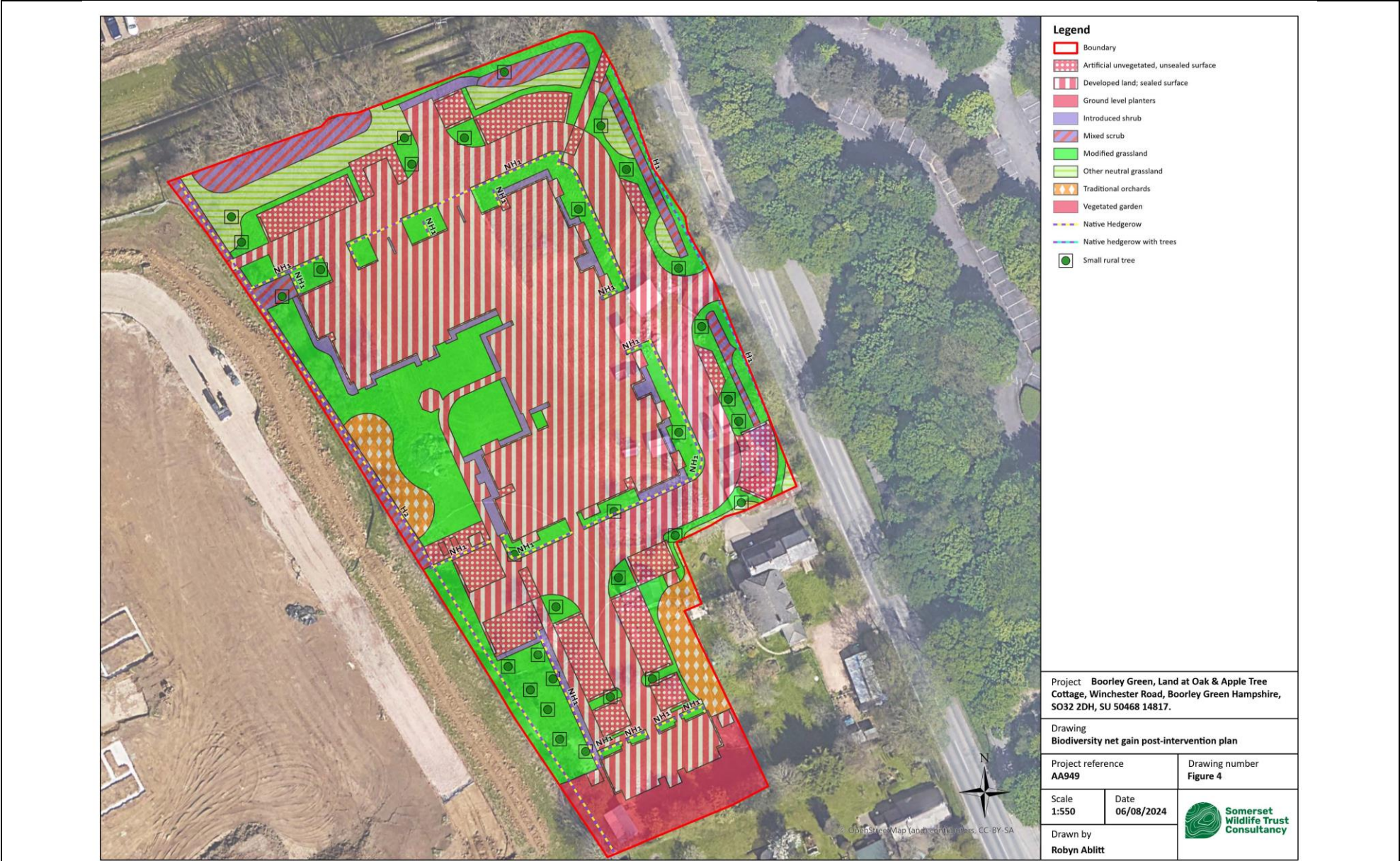


Figure 4 Biodiversity net gain post-intervention plan

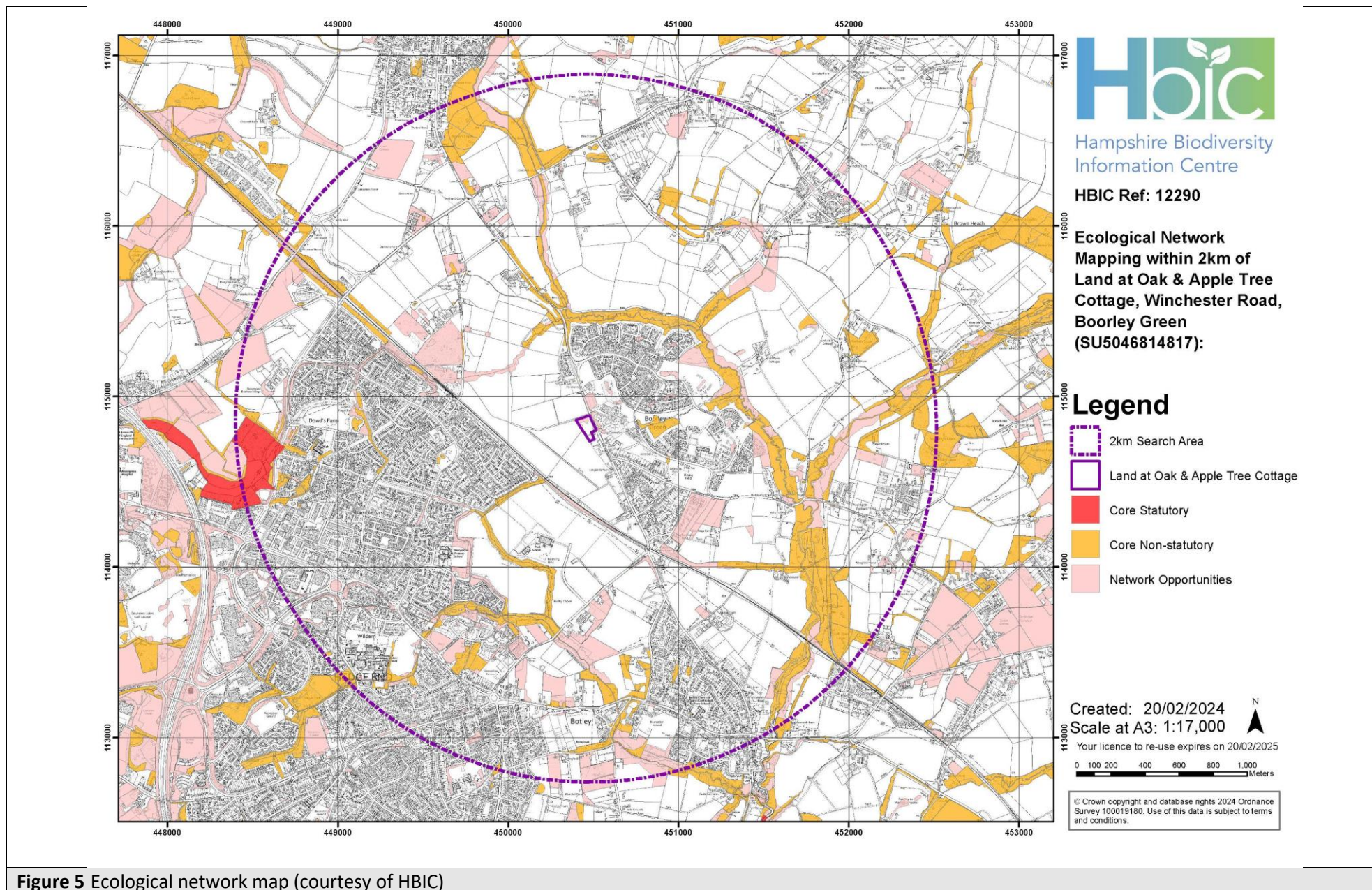


Figure 5 Ecological network map (courtesy of HBIC)

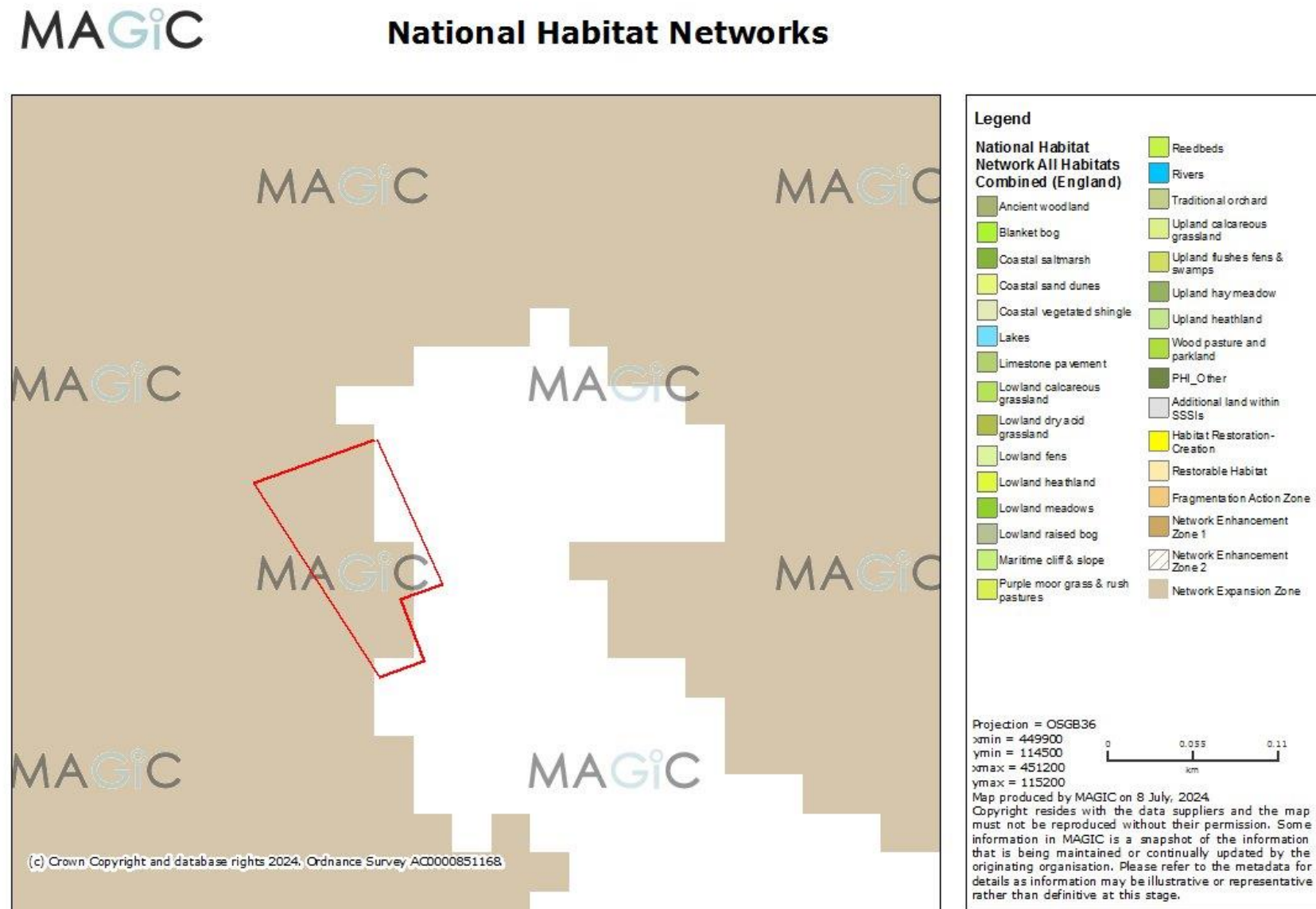


Figure 6 National Habitat Networks (courtesy of MAGiC)

8.0 Appendices

Appendix A Acronyms

Table 6. Acronyms used within the report (table continues).

Acronym	Description
ACIEEM	Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ARC	Aeronautical Reconnaissance Coverage
AWI	Ancient Woodland Inventory
AWIS	Ancient Woodland Indicator Species
BSc (Hons)	Bachelor of Science with Honours
CEMP	Construction Ecological Management Plan
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CWS	County Wildlife Site
DBH	Diameter at breast height
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
E	East (-ern/-erly)
ENE	Eastnortheasterly
ESE	Eastsoutheasterly
EUNIS	European nature information system
GIS	Geographic Information System
HBIC	Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre
HMMP	Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
Hons	Honours
IAW	Inventory of Ancient Woodland
LEMP	Landscape Ecological Management Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MAGIC	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside
MArborA	Full member of the Arboricultural Association
Mbiol (Hons)	Master of Biology (Mbiol) with Honours (Hons)
MCIEEM	Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
MSc	Master of Science
N	North (-ern/-erly)
N/A	Not Applicable
NE	Northeasterly
NNE	Northnortheasterly
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
NW	Northwesterly
OSWI	Other Sites of Wildlife Interest
RCA	River Condition Assessment
Ramsar	Wetland Site of International Importance
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
S	South (-ern/-erly)
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SE	Southeasterly
SNCI	Site of Nature Conservation Importance

Acronym	Description
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSE	Southsoutheasterly
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SSW	Southsouthwesterly
SW	Southwesterly
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
UKHab	United Kingdom Habitat Classification
UWS	Unconfirmed Wildlife Site
W	West (-ern/-erly)
WFD	Water framework directive
WSW	Westsouthwesterly

Appendix B Relevant planning policy and legislation

The following information provides a summary of relevant planning policy and legislation in relation to biodiversity net gain.

National legislation and planning policy

The Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 achieved Royal Assent in November 2021, providing a new legislative framework for developments to consider in respect of potential environmental impacts and opportunities. Within the Act, there is a requirement for all developments within England (unless exempt) to exceed the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitat by at least 10%, measured using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.

On the 12th February 2024 it became a mandatory requirement of the planning process for the majority of planning applications (unless exempt), with a delay applied for 'small sites' and NSIPs until the 2nd April 2024 and late November 2025, respectively.

The National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out national planning policy and provides guidance to local planning authorities to apply within local plans. The revised NPPF continues to stress the importance of the local authority contribution to improving and protecting the environment through development of a systematic approach to enhancing biodiversity, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigation/adaptation to climate change impacts. Of particular relevance to ecology is paragraph 180, which specifies that planning permission should be refused in cases where the development would cause significant harm to biodiversity, have adverse impacts on designated sites or result in deterioration of irreplaceable habitats.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal piece of UK legislation relating to the protection of wildlife. It consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

The Act makes it an offence (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests. Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young. The Secretary of State may also designate Special Protection Areas (subject to exceptions) to provide further protection to birds. The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking birds, restricts the sale and possession of captive bred birds, and sets standards for keeping birds in captivity.

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed in Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places. The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals listed in Schedule 6.

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to pick, uproot, trade in, or possess (for the purposes of trade) any wild plant listed in Schedule 8, and prohibits the unauthorised intentional uprooting of such plants.

The Act contains measures for preventing the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the release of animals and planting of plants listed in Schedule 9. It also provides a mechanism making any of the above offences legal through the granting of licences by the appropriate authorities.

Appendix C Explanation of Metric terms

Table 7. Explanation of biodiversity metric tool terms.

Biodiversity metric term	Explanation
Area habitat	Habitats recorded in the biodiversity metric tool in area (hectares).
Assessor	The competent person completing the biodiversity metric tool.
Biodiversity unit	‘Biodiversity units’ are used to describe relative biodiversity value. There are three types of biodiversity units: area habitat units, hedgerow units and watercourse units. Each of these are calculated in separate ‘modules’ of the biodiversity metric.
Condition	A measure of the habitat against its ecological optimum state. Condition is a way of measuring variation in the quality of patches of the same habitat type.
Condition assessment	The process of assigning habitat condition, to be undertaken by a competent person.
Difficulty	A measure which represents the uncertainty in the effectiveness of management techniques used to enhance or create habitat.
Distinctiveness	A measure based on the type of habitat and its distinguishing features. This includes: • consideration of species richness and rarity • the extent to which the habitat is protected by designations • the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats.
Reviewer	A person reviewing the biodiversity metric outputs to check the biodiversity metric rules, principles and guidance have been followed. A review is usually from a relevant planning authority.
Habitat type	The technical annex lists biodiversity metric habitat types and their source material. Source material includes: • UK Habitat Classification • Natura 2000 (Annex I habitats) • European Nature Information System habitat type hierarchical view - Water Framework Directive Lake typologies
Habitat parcel	A linked area of habitat of the same distinctiveness, condition and strategic significance.
Linear habitat	Habitats recorded in the biodiversity metric according to length (kilometres) instead of area (hectares). This includes habitats in the hedgerow and watercourse modules. It’s taken as a centre line measurement along the length of the feature.
Project timeframe	The timeframe over which the biodiversity metric calculates gains and losses for specific habitat interventions.
Size	The size of the habitat parcel to be retained, enhanced, created, or lost. Size is measured in hectares for area features or in kilometres for linear features. The biodiversity metric tool accepts size measurements to any number of decimal places.
Spatial risk	Spatial risk represents the relationship between the location of biodiversity loss (on-site) and where the off-site habitat is being delivered. This is applied to off-site interventions only.
Strategic significance	Describes the local significance of the habitat based on its location and the habitat type.
Time to target condition	The average time taken between starting creation or enhancement of habitats and that habitat reaching its target condition or distinctiveness.

Appendix D Relevant Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy employee competencies

- Charlie Fayers, former employee of Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy as a Senior Ecologist, BSc (Hons), ACIEEM, Natural England Class Licence CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2) Registration Number: 2016-21963-CLS-CLS, Natural England Class Licence CL08 (Great Crested Newt Survey Level 1) Registration Number: 2016-23475-CLS-CLS. Comprehensive experience in habitat assessment since May 2014 (formally trained in UKHab and River Condition Assessment) and has completed a variety of Biodiversity Net Gain projects including survey, use of Defra Metric (Versions 2.0, 3.0, 3.1, 4.0 and Statutory) and report production, review and authorisation.
- Robyn Ablitt, Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy, Senior Arboriculturist/Ecologist, BSc (Hons), ACIEEM, Level 2 Cert Arb, Natural England Class Licence CL17 (Bat Survey Level 1) Registration Number: 2023-11693-CL17-BAT, Natural England Class Licence CL08 (Great Crested Newt Survey Level 1) Registration Number 2015-16924-CLS-CLS, Natural Resources Wales Great Crested Newt Licence Number: S090845/1, professional member of the Arboricultural Association (MArborA). Accredited agent of Alexia Michaelides, Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy, Ecologist, MBiol (Hons), ACIEEM, Natural England Dormouse Level 1 Survey Class Licence CL10a Registration Number: 2022-10028-CL10a-DOR and Natural Resources Wales Dormouse Licence Number: S091240/1. Comprehensive experience in habitat assessment since September 2011 (formally trained in UKHab and accredited in River Condition Assessment) and has completed a variety of Biodiversity Net Gain projects including survey, use of Defra Metric (Versions 2.0, 3.0, 3.1, 4.0 and Statutory) and report production, review and authorisation.
- Stephanie Bentham-Green, Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy, Principal Ecologist, BSc (Hons), ACIEEM, Natural England Class Licence CL17 (Bat Survey Level 1) Registration Number: 2021-51332-CLS-CLS, Natural England Class Licence CL08 (Great Crested Newt Survey Level 1) Registration Number 2018-37987-CLS-CLS, Natural Resources Wales Great Crested Newt Licence Number: S090961/1, Natural England Dormouse Class Licence CL10A (Dormouse Survey) Registration Number: 2019-39610-CLS-CLS, Natural Resources Wales Dormouse Licence Number: S090966/1. Accredited agent of Hannah Bates to Bat Survey Level 1 under S092610/1. Comprehensive experience in habitat assessment since April 2016 (formally trained in UKHab and accredited in River Condition Assessment) and has completed a variety of Biodiversity Net Gain projects including survey, use of Defra Metric (Versions 2.0, 3.0, 3.1, 4.0 and Statutory) and report production, review and authorisation.