



Land at Inwood Cottage, Winchester Road,
Upham, Hampshire, SO32 1HH.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Southern Planning Practice Ltd is instructed on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hulme to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of Inwood Cottage, Winchester Road, Upham, Hampshire, SO32 1HH

The purpose of the assessment is to quantify the baseline habitat, identify areas available for biodiversity restoration and provide a project with a measurable minimum 10% BNG utilising the statutory BNG metric (2023).

The following survey work was undertaken:

- Desk study using freely available resources.
- A habitat survey utilising UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) methodology.

The site is currently used for the grazing of sheep with little benefit to biodiversity. The proposed development will be unable to provide onsite gain therefore the client has provided additional land in close proximity to the site to compensate for the minimal on site losses.

Within the last 4 years a small area of crushed chalk and a field shelter have been erected on the land and due to these changes in the land the baseline for BNG calculations has been taken as a date post 30 January 2020 when the biodiversity value of the land is likely to have been at its highest as specified in Schedule 7a of the Town and Country Planning Act.

16.71% offsite biodiversity net gain can be achieved through the provision of enhance species rich neutral grassland as outlined in section 7 of this report.



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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

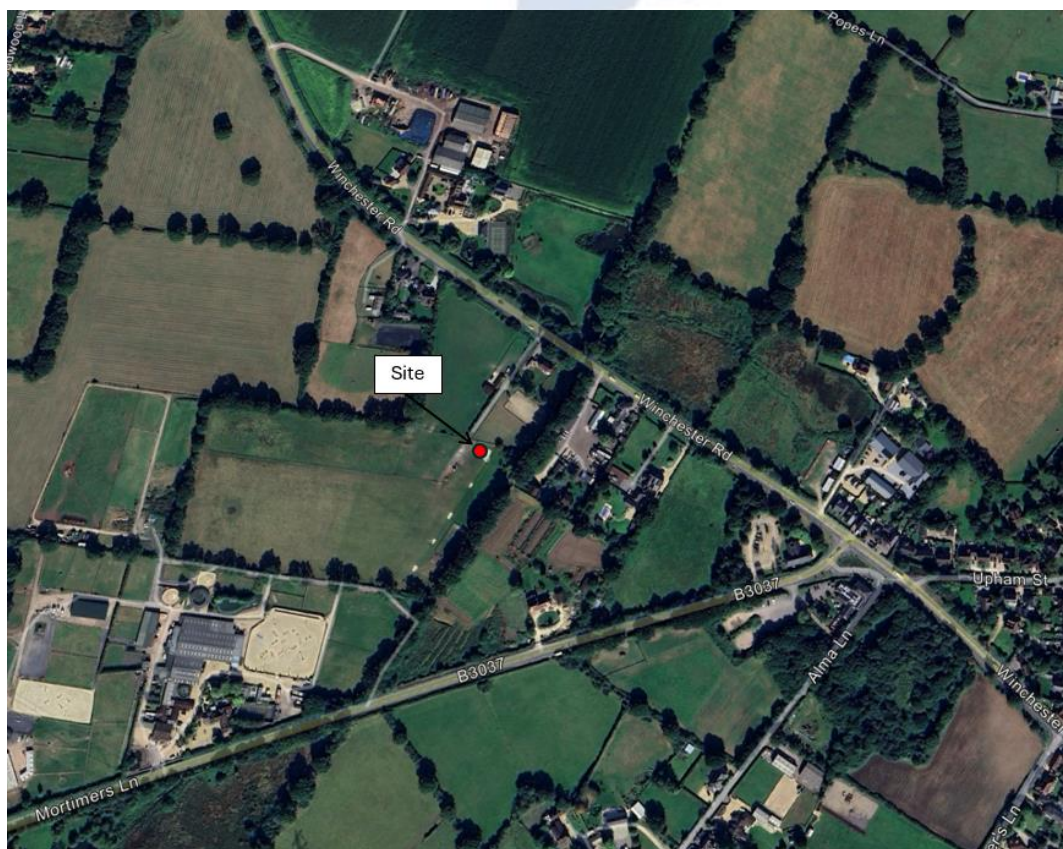
- I.1 Southern Planning Practice Ltd is instructed on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hulme to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment in support of an application for the construction of a new stable block at Inwood Cottage, Winchester Road, Upham, SO32 1HH (the site).
- I.2 The objectives of the BNG assessment are to:
- i. Quantify the baseline biodiversity of the site.
 - ii. Make recommendations to deliver ecological enhancements.
 - iii. Quantify a deliverable BNG for the project.
- I.3 The BNG assessment has been undertaken utilising the statutory BNG metric and associated, relevant conditions assessment sheet(s).

Note: The findings of this report are valid for 18 months and should works not be undertaken within this timeframe the report may need updating.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- I.4 The site is located within the village of Lower Upham and accessed directly off of the B2177 Winchester Road. The site is a 0.048 plot (centred on OS grid reference SU5194 1966) (figure 1).
- I.5 The site is adjacent to the main residential property and gardens to the east with open grazed pasture to the north, south and west. The land is enclosed by post and wire fence and is currently being used to graze a small herd of sheep. There is small field shelter which has been sited on a permeable chalk base. Common features within the wider landscape include native hawthorn hedgerow and lines of very large mature Oak trees.

Figure I. Site location



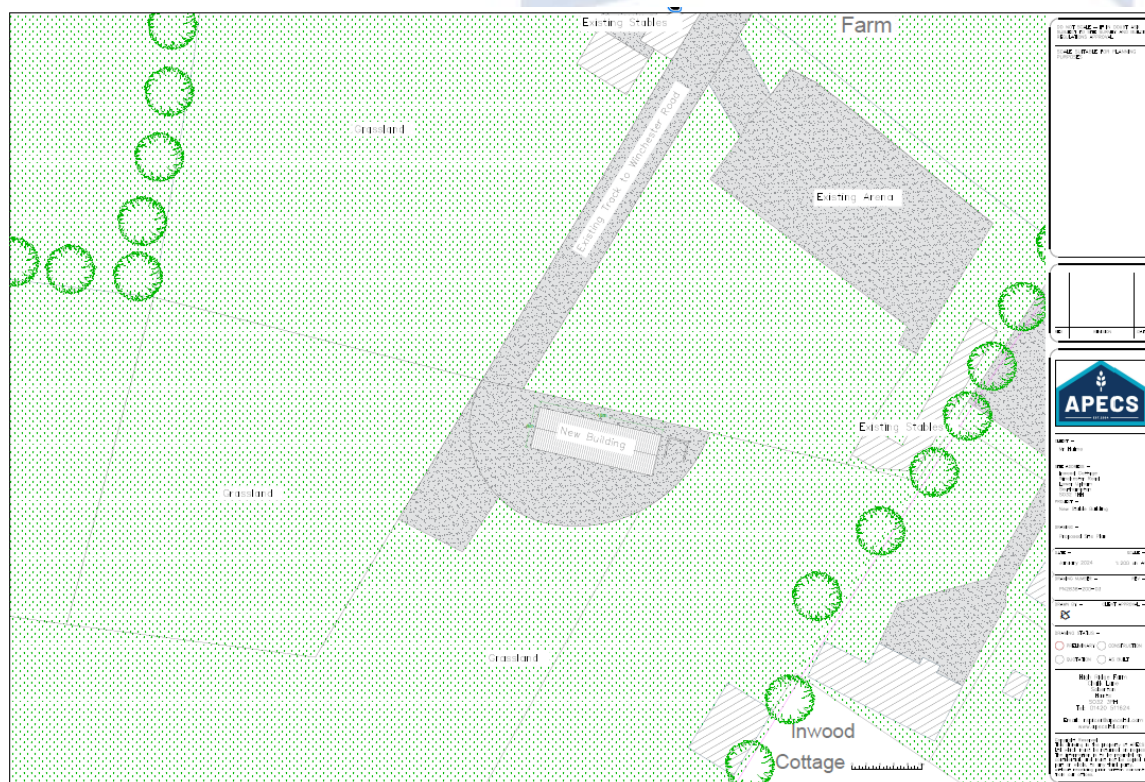
Note. Adapted from Google Earth, 2025.

- I.6 The Environment Agency flood risk map locates the site in Flood Zone I, so is not at risk from flooding from rivers and the sea.
- I.7 There are no public rights of way in close proximity to the site.

PROPOSAL

- I.8 The proposed development is for the removal of a small field shelter with associated semi permeable crushed chalk base and the creation of a larger area of harvesting with new permanent stable block. As the red line is drawn tightly to the boundaries of the development BNG will need to be provided off site. The owner has a parcel of land to the south of the site which will be utilised for this as detailed in Section 8 of this report.

Figure 2. Site block plan.



SECTION 2 – LEGISLATION

The Environment Act 2021

- 2.1 Of relevance, the Environment Act 2021 makes provision for targets, plans, and policies for protecting and improving water quality, air quality and nature and biodiversity. The legislation established the Office for Environmental protection, tasked to hold the government accountable on environmental issues. Part 6 details requirement for the achievement of 10% biodiversity gain mandatory for development under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).

The Town and Country Planning Act

- 2.2 Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act makes Biodiversity Net Gain a mandatory requirement for grants of planning permission in England. Schedule 7 requires that the post-development biodiversity value of a development exceeds the pre-development value by at least 10% and are to be calculated in accordance with the biodiversity metric.

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulation 2024

- 2.3 These regulations define ‘irreplaceable habitats’ for the purpose of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act (the Act) and modify the requirements therein so the 10% gain requirement is disapplied and alternative arrangements are required to minimise any adverse effect on habitat deemed irreplaceable. The Schedule of the Regulations defines ‘Irreplaceable habitats’.

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

- 2.4 These Regulations exempt certain types of development from meeting BNG requirements. The exemptions in these Regulations relate to:
- (a) small developments where an application for planning permission is made or has been granted before April 2024,
 - (b) developments with no impact on priority habitat and where impacts on other habitat fall below specified thresholds,
 - (c) householder applications,
 - (d) the high-speed railway network,
 - (e) off-site gain developments i.e. developments which fulfil the biodiversity net gain requirement arising in relation to another development, and
 - (f) certain self-build and custom build developments.

SECTION 3 – POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development to which there are 3 dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. The environmental objective seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment and improve biodiversity. Chapter 15 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity, minimising impacts on, and providing net gains, for biodiversity and improving local environmental conditions.

NPPF Guidance on biodiversity net gain (14 February 2024) states that it will be inappropriate for plans of supplementary planning documents to include policies or guidance which are incompatible with the statutory BNG framework, for instance by applying biodiversity net gain to exempt categories of development. (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 74-006-20240214)

UK Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework

- 3.2 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) is superseded by the UK Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework and is in response to the EU Biodiversity Strategy and an internationally agreed set of commitments termed the Aichi Targets, which combined aim to halt biodiversity losses. The habitats and species contained within the UKBAP are regarded as priorities under the Framework and are a material consideration in the planning process.

Local: Eastleigh Borough Council

- 3.3 The Eastleigh Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted on 25 April 2022. The earlier appeal was determined in accordance with this plan. The Plan outlines several policies that seek to preserve and enhance biodiversity which are detailed below.

- Policy S1. Delivering sustainable development.

This policy highlights several strategic aims including to ‘maintain, enhance, extend and connect the natural habitats within and landscape value of the Borough, extending natural habitats into new and existing development to achieve an environmental net gain’ (l.k.)

- Policy S9. Green infrastructure.

The Council seeks to retain, enhance, or create multifunctional green infrastructure to improve connectivity for biodiversity across the district.

- Policy DMI General criteria for new development.

This states all new development should not have an unacceptable impact on biodiversity, and where possible should enhance it.

At international level the policy reiterates the legal requirement for Habitat Regulation Assessments and proposes the development of a strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of internationally designated sites which are to include:

a. implementing:

i. the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (requiring contributions from residential developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent Special Protection Area to the Strategy); and
ii. the interim and any future New Forest Recreation Mitigation Strategy if required; or alternative agreed site-specific measures to address recreational disturbance;

b. preserving the water quality and flows within the Itchen and Hamble, Southampton Water and Solent;

c. 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 I of the Habitats Directive); and

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

At a national and local level, the policy seeks to ensure development will not adversely affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) utilising the mitigation hierarchy and includes biodiversity net gain. The same approach is advocated for Priority habitats, protected and priority species and the local ecological network. And in all but exceptional circumstances, and with appropriate compensatory measure development is not permitted which would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats. There is a requirement for development free buffers and survey requirements for protected species notably as part of the great crested newt strategic survey strategy and the strategic bat trapping survey.

SECTION 4 – METHODOLOGY

DESK STUDY

- 4.1 Data sourced using freely available online maps and databases have helped inform this report.
- 4.2 The condition of the site on and since the 30 January 2020 was established as far as practically possible utilising online imagery with specific reference to Google Maps and Google Earth Pro and Blue Sky to determine if habitats on site had been degraded since that date. As stated in paragraph 6 of schedule 7a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, where habitats have been degraded since 30 January 2020 the biodiversity value of the site is calculated as the highest biodiversity value that can reasonably be supported by available evidence prior to any such works having occurred.

FIELD SURVEY

- 4.3 The site was surveyed at 10:30am on 28/08/24 by Nichola Windebank (MSc.) (CIEEM qualifying membership). The weather was 19°C, sunny and with a light wind. Habitats were classified in accordance with Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023).

BNG METRIC

- 4.4 Utilising the field survey data and data available from online sources indicating the condition of the site since 30 January 2020 information on the earlier site condition was entered into the statutory metric (2024) using metric condition sheets for scoring where necessary. Following the establishment of baseline data, the biodiversity improvements proposed for the site were calculated.

LIMITATIONS

- 4.5 The survey was conducted within the optimum season for flowering vascular plants and trees. However, the land is heavily grazed by sheep and most forbs are likely to have been grazed off.
- 4.6 The site has been altered since the 30 January 2020 with areas of grassland covered by chalk. Establishing the baseline biodiversity data is reliant upon remaining site conditions and available evidence of the earlier site condition.
- 4.7 Please note this survey does not constitute a full assessment for invasive species and is a snapshot of the site taken at a singular point in time. Ecological habitats can change and therefore this report is only valid for 18 months.

SECTION 5 – RESULTS

FIELD SURVEY

- 5.1 The site is used for grazing by sheep. Prior to this, around two to three years ago it was used for Silage. The land is not treated with any chemical fertilisers or herbicides and is not mown. The grass is maintained at a short sward through constant grazing and is comprised of the following habitats as classified with UKHab Ltd, 2023:

1. g3c - Other neutral grassland, Secondary Codes: 102 Sheep grazed
2. u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface. Secondary Codes: 833 Barn

1 - g3c - Other neutral grassland, Secondary Codes: 102 Sheep grazed

- 5.2 The land is predominantly grassland with grass species including perennial ryegrass, cocks foot and annual meadow grass. Within the short, grazed sward there are occasional bitter dock, creeping buttercup and white clover. (Figure 4).

2 - u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface. Secondary Codes: 833 Barn

- 5.3 A small area of crushed chalk has been recently laid over the grass to provide a temporary base for a field shelter. This will be replaced with a more permanent base should the application be approved.

Figure 4. Grassland with associated chalk base and field shelter



Note. Authors own taken 28/08/2024

- 5.4 The field shelter and crushed chalk are relatively recent features. The images from google earth (figure 5) indicate this area was used as pasture and was used for the dumping of materials and for turning of farm machinery. There is a large area of bare soil adjacent to the access track and a similar environment can be seen in the 2014 and 2015 images.

Figure 5. Historic images showing evolution of the site condition.



Note. Images from Google Earth 2025

- 5.6 Using the evidence gained on the site survey and that available through online sources as indicated above the baseline habitats are likely to be at their highest value for the purpose of the metric when used for the grazing of sheep before any structures were placed onto the site. Therefore, the entire unit is mapped as g3c - Other neutral grassland, Secondary Codes: 102 Sheep grazed. Prior to this the land was used as a Hay Silage.

SECTION 6 – BNG PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 BNG good practice principles have been followed when considering development of this site. The proposed development will result in a loss of 0.048 ha of poor quality other neutral grassland for which habitat mitigation will include a new area of species rich neutral grassland 120m southwest of the site, at the end of the adjacent land parcel, and within the applicant's ownership.

Principle 1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy.

- 6.2 The loss could not be avoided on site and losses are compensated for within very close proximity to the site which will provide significantly better habitat that exists.

Principle 2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere.

- 6.3 There are no impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity.

Principle 3. Be inclusive and equitable.

- 6.4 The design of the BNG offsite will be implemented by the site owners with monitoring to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Principle 4. Address risks.

- 6.5 Implementation and monitoring will be addressed through an appropriate management plan to be agreed in writing with the LPA.

Principle 5. Make a measurable Net Gain contribution.

- 6.6 Utilising the statutory biodiversity metric a net gain of 16.71% (habitat units) can be achieved by the proposed offsite mitigation works.

Principle 6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity.

- 6.7 The existing land use is of very limited value to biodiversity. The grazing of this area of land will continue and therefore ensure a nearby land parcel is able to provide improved habitat will be of substantial benefit to biodiversity, notably pollinators and other insects, small mammals, birds and reptiles.

Principle 7. Be additional.

- 6.8 Given the use of the land for the grazing of sheep it is considered highly unlikely that any improvements to the land would occur naturally.

Principle 8. Create a Net Gain legacy.

- 6.9 Net gain can be easily achieved with minimal management for perpetuity offsite. The additional benefits will be improved visual interest and provide wildlife opportunities in a limited urban environment.

Principle 9. Optimise sustainability.

- 6.10 The development is relatively small scale and will provide local level gains.

Principle 10. Be transparent.

- 6.11 Management and monitoring reports will be freely available throughout the process.

SECTION 7 – BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 8.1 The development cannot demonstrate any on site Biodiversity Net Gain, however land within the wider ownership of the applicant has been set aside to provide the necessary compensation.
- 8.2 This section of the report will provide some limited detail regarding the off site selection, base conditions and proposed BNG. The owner has been advised that this will require a legal agreement and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to secure the site for a minimum of 30 years. This will be undertaken should the council consider the proposed off site measures favourably in principle. Condition sheets and a completed metric are provided separate to this report.
- 8.3 The site is located within the wider site ownership of the applicant approximately 120m to the southwest of the application site. The land is 0.08 ha, is seasonally used for grazing as required, and centred at SU5191 1953 (figure 6).

Figure 6. Off-Site location in relation to application site.



Note. Image adapted from MAGIC (27.01.2025)

- 8.4 The land set aside for the offsite BNG is roughly rectangular in shape in shape and is in an area formerly used for occasional grazing of sheep. The east and south boundaries contain a line of mature offsite Oak trees and there are currently some small piles of wood which may provide good habitat for insects and reptiles. To the west is sheep grazed pasture. The field is enclosed by post and rail fence and is part of a much wider parcel of land which is used as a small holding.
- 8.5 Details of the assessment can be found in appendix A. The walked W transect for reference can be found at figure 5

Figure 7. Location of sample survey sites



Note. Image adapted from MAGIC (27.01.2025)

- 8.6 Within the UKHabs definition the site is currently modified grassland with moderate nutrient loading and thatch understory. The land is clay and becomes wet and boggy in winter and dries out in the summer. Parts of the land is also heavily shaded from the south and east.
- 8.7 The proposal would see the grassland improved with reduced nutrient loading and a management regime aimed at creating a tussocky sward with improved species richness.
- 8.8 The offsite measures will result in a BNG of 16.71% (habitat units).

REFERENCES

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Natural England (2023). Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide. <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/downloads/Design%20Guide%20-%20Green%20Infrastructure%20Framework.pdf>

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Appendix A – Off site survey work

Name	Nichola Windebank	Date/ time	20.01.2025/ 10am
Site	Inwood Cottage, Winchester Road, Upham, Hampshire, SO32 1HH (offsite)	OS (centre)	SU5191 1953
Site conditions			
Temperature: 2°C		Wind (Beaufort): 1	
Cloud cover: 90%		Precipitation: 0	
Method	Walked W transect (1m x 1m quadrats)		
Quadrats			
No./ OS ref	Species	DAFOR	Notes/ Photographs
A / SU5192 1955	Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>) Meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>) Bitter dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>) Sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>) Grasses: Meadow Blue grass (<i>Poa pratensis</i>) Creeping bent (<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>) Yorkshire Fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>)	F O O R	Northwest of field open aspect to adjacent grazing land 

B/ SU5190 1953	Bitter dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>) Meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>) Grasses: Perennial Ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>) Cocksfoot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>)	O F	Northeast field edge, shaded in the morning by offsite Oaks, boundary contains log piles. Some off site bramble. 
C/ SU5190 1954	Meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>) Curly dock (<i>Rumex crispus</i>) Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>) Grasses: Perennial Ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>) Meadow Blue grass (<i>Poa pratensis</i>)	O O R	Central to field 
D/ SU5189 1953	Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>) Meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>) Bitter dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>) Grasses: Meadow Blue grass (<i>Poa pratensis</i>)	F O R	<u>South east</u> field corner (adjacent to shed)

	Cocksfoot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>) Yorkshire Fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>)		
E/ SU5190 1955	Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>) Bitter dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>) Grasses: Cocksfoot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>) Yorkshire Fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>) Perennial Ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>)	F R	Lots of moss in the ground flora indicative of shaded damp conditions. 