Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment: Design Stage

February 2025

Stonehouse Farm, Handcross

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

On behalf of
Lake Investments Ltd

Report No: CSA/6746/06

CSA environmental

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Report Reference	Revision	Date	Prepared by	Approved by	Comments
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	A	26/02/2025	LG	CC	Scheme updates
	B	28/02/2025	LG	CC	Scheme updates

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Development is proposed at Stonehouse Farm, Handcross. A full planning application will be submitted, consisting of three application sites (referred to herein as 'Stonehouse Business Park', 'Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building' and 'Jackson's Ridge'). A Site Wide Masterplan (CSA/6746/111/H) has been prepared to show how these proposed development areas relate to one another, and highting future aspirations for habitat creation and enhancement across the wider landholding. Planning permission is sought from Horsham District Council which will be subject to the Biodiversity Gain Condition in accordance with Schedule 14 of the Environment Act (2021), where exemptions are not applicable (as detailed herein).

CSA Environmental was instructed by Lakeside Development Ltd to undertake a 'Design Stage' Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) of the proposed development. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool was used to determine pre- and post- development biodiversity values and predict the net effect of the proposed development upon biodiversity.

Stonehouse Business Park baseline habitats are dominated by habitats of 'very low' distinctiveness comprising a commercial buildings / barns and associated hard-standing (developed land - sealed surface), bounded by native hedgerows of 'medium' distinctiveness, with a small parcels of 'low' distinctiveness grassland which will in part be impacted by the proposed development. As such, the proposed. As such, the proposals will be subject to Biodiversity Net Gain obligations and a biodiversity impact score of +0.33 Habitat Units (+166.07% net gain) and +0.78 Hedgerow Units (+18.59% net gain) has been calculated using the Statutory Metric.

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building baseline habitats comprise habitats of 'very low' distinctiveness comprising commercial buildings / barns and associated hard-standing (developed land - sealed surface), alongside habitats of 'low' and 'medium' distinctiveness including grassland, an ephemeral pond and native hedgerows which will in part be impacted by the proposed development. As such, the proposals will be subject to Biodiversity Net Gain obligations and a biodiversity impact score of +0.77 Habitat Units (+18.37% net gain) and +1.70 Hedgerow Units (+25.10% net gain) has been calculated using the Statutory Metric.

Jackson's Ridge baseline habitats comprise habitats of 'very low' distinctiveness comprising agricultural buildings / barns and associated hard-standing (developed land - sealed surface), alongside 'low' and 'medium' distinctiveness habitats including grassland, scrub and hedgerows / tree lines which will in part be impacted by the proposed

development. As such, the proposals will be subject to Biodiversity Net Gain obligations and a biodiversity impact score of -0.52 Habitat Units (-46.58%) and 0.00 Hedgerow Units (0.00% net gain) has been calculated using the Statutory Metric.

Proposals are coming forward to register the wider landholding at Stonehouse Farm as a "Habitat Bank", in which the required Habitat and Hedgerow Units to satisfy the deficit could be sourced. However, off-Site Units could equally be sourced from an external off-Site provider if necessary.

Off-Site habitat creation proposed to off-set Jackson's Ridge includes 0.09ha of scrub habitat (or habitat of the same distinctiveness, or a small area of greater distinctiveness), with 0.015km of native hedgerow (or hedgerow of the same distinctiveness, or a lesser length of greater distinctiveness),

Subject to securing the above through relevant legal mechanisms the Biodiversity Gain Condition could be discharged following grant of consent through submission of a Biodiversity Gain Plan template as drafted herein. It is proposed the wording of any net gain condition identifies the biodiversity net gain requirements and provision for each part / phase of the proposed development separately; and with a sperate Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) being prepared and implemented in relation to each part / phase of development.

To assist Horsham District Council in their consideration of BNG and the proposed development, relevant statements have been set out in Box 1 and 2 in respect of applicable BNG policy and legal requirements.

Box 1. Biodiversity Net Gain Statements
Planning permission sought for the development, if granted, **would be subject to the Biodiversity Gain Condition** as set out within Schedule 14 of the Environment Act (2021) **in relation to development proposed at Stonehouse Business Park, Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building and Jackson's Ridge** given the following: • Planning permission is applied for after 12 February 2024 • Planning permission does not relate to development consented prior to 12 February 2024 ('major developments') and subject to a 'Section 73' amendment, or comprise a Reserved Matters application pursuant to such consent • Impacts to habitats are predicted on-site that either exceed 25 square metres per 5 linear metres with a value greater than zero, and/or impacts to any 'Section 41' habitat of principal importance • Planning permission sought does not relate to a 'householder application' or 'the high-speed railway transport network' • Planning permission is not for self-build or custom housebuilding and relates to more than 9 dwellings and/or proposals cover over 0.5ha • Planning permission does not relate directly to off-site gain developments to fulfil other BNG requirements
The biodiversity value of on-site habitats set out herein relate to the date of the planning application and not an earlier date.
The biodiversity value of on-site habitats set out herein are not lower than on date of application.
On-site biodiversity gain proposed herein is significant based upon the following: • Proposed habitats include those of medium and higher distinctiveness comprising other neutral grassland, trees and native hedgerows.
The Site does not contain irreplaceable habitat as defined under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024).
As set out herein measures have been taken in a step-wise fashion to: • First avoid adverse effects of the development upon on-site medium or higher distinctiveness habitat and, where they cannot be avoided, the mitigate these effects; • Taking an approach to first seek on-site habitat enhancement, then habitat creation • Where above cannot fully compensate, seek registered off-site gains • And finally, where off-site gains cannot be secured, seeking purchase of biodiversity credits

Box 2. Accordance with 'Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development' (Baker et al., 2019).	
Principle 1. Apply the 'Mitigation Hierarchy'	Design decisions have been documented within the prepared EcIA due consideration for the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) (CIEEM, 2018) including mitigation hierarchy. Trading rules have been accorded with in the prepared metric and ecologically justified decisions have been taken in respect of proposed habitats. Habitat retention and creation have been prioritised over off-Site provision, where possible.
Principle 2. Avoid losing biodiversity which cannot be offset by gains elsewhere (e.g., irreplaceable habitats).	No ancient woodland habitats are present on-site and those nearby have been protected from loss or deterioration through indirect impact pathways. Notable habitats and features (Including old hedgerows and mature trees) have been prioritised for protection as part of the proposed design.
Principle 3. Be inclusive & equitable	Design decisions have considered wider stakeholders, including consultation with local residents.
Principle 4. Address risks (e.g., difficulty of achieving habitat creation/enhancement)	A precautionary approach has been taken to grassland habitat type and condition for on-site biodiversity gain provision, with the highest provision comprising other neutral grassland in poor condition.
Principle 5. Make a 'measurable' Net Gain contribution (e.g., calculated using an appropriate metric).	The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been used to demonstrate a clear and quantified calculation of the net effect of development upon biodiversity, using habitat as a proxy for wider biodiversity.
Principle 6. Ensure that Net Gain design achieves the best outcomes for biodiversity (quantitative and qualitative assessment) and create a net gain legacy for long-term benefits.	The developments largely consist of redevelopment of existing hardstanding and buildings, and include limited habitat of wildlife value. New habitat creation will provide habitat valuable to local wildlife, and contribute to the habitat provision across the wider landholding. The new grassland and tree creation will provide opportunities for invertebrates, birds and small mammals including bats.
Principle 7. Be additional Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).	Habitat creation and enhancement proposals are not required to deliver habitat / protected species mitigation within the Application site areas subject to Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.
Principle 8. Create a Net Gain legacy Ensure Net Gain generates long-term benefits.	Management will be adaptive to ensure net gain targets are reached and will be secured through a HMMP / Biodiversity Gain Plan. Public access will be discouraged from the newly created habitats.
Principle 9. Optimise sustainability Optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.	Habitat creation, including grassland and scattered trees will continue to provide habitats that were present at the baseline, providing a diversity of habitats on Site, primarily made up of hardstanding, These will contribute to habitat provision within the wider landholding and local landscape, providing wider environmental benefits.
Principle 10. Be transparent Communicate all Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.	Net gain activities will be communicated to relevant stakeholders at the operational phase via monitoring studies and reporting so that learning is shared and informed decisions can be made and adaptive management changes.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental on behalf of Lake Investment Ltd. It sets out the findings of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) of proposed development at Stonehouse Farm, Handcross (hereafter 'the Site'), for which planning permission is sought. A full planning application will be submitted, consisting of three application areas within the Stonehouse Farm landholding. These are referred to as 'Stonehouse Business Park', 'Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building' and 'Jackson's Ridge'. A Site Wide Masterplan (CSA/6746/111/H) has been prepared to show how these proposed development areas relate to one another, and highting future aspirations for habitat creation and enhancement across the wider landholding. This report details the predicted net effect of the proposed development upon biodiversity.

1.2 This report has been prepared with due consideration for the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's guidance for design stage reporting on Biodiversity Net Gain (CIEEM, 2021). The report also takes into account wider CIEEM best-practice guidance (2017 & 2018), Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development (Baker et al., 2019) and the Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development, published by the British Standards Institute (BS 42020:2013).

1.3 Stonehouse farm (the wider landholding) is located at central grid reference TQ 22998 28157, to the west of Handcross.

Stonehouse Business Park occupies an area of 1.08ha within the south-east of Stonehouse Farm (located around central grid reference TQ 23264 28096), and consists of several commercial units, largely surrounded by hardstanding (see Stonehouse Business Park Habitats Plan (CSA/6476/102/B). Baseline habitats are dominated by habitats of 'very low' distinctiveness comprising a commercial buildings /barns and associated hard-standing (developed land - sealed surface), bounded by native hedgerows of 'medium' distinctiveness, and small parcels of 'low' distinctiveness grassland. The proposed development will result in some impacts to existing semi-natural habitat of 'low' value or above.

1.4 **Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building** occupies an area of 2.64ha within the south-west of Stonehouse Farm (located around grid reference TQ 22709 28302), and consists of agricultural buildings, with areas of hardstanding, sparsely vegetated land and an ephemeral pond within the curtilage of the buildings. A narrow strip of grassland is present to the north of the buildings, and a small strip of grassland is present to the south of the buildings, where the application boundary cuts across the adjacent field. A hardstanding access track runs from the buildings to Handcross Road to the south. Native tree lines and hedgerows are present along the boundaries and access track. The

proposed development will result in some impacts to existing semi-natural habitat of 'low' value or above.

1.5 **Jackson's Ridge** occupies 0.49ha located in the north of Stonehouse Farm (around grid reference TQ 22799 28783) and consists of a complex of farm buildings and associated hardstanding. Areas of sparsely vegetated land, made-up ground and grassland with tall forbs have developed within disused areas of this Site. The proposed development will result in some impacts to existing semi-natural of 'low' value or above.

1.6 This report should be read in conjunction with the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) (CSA/6746/08) prepared for the proposed development which provides full baseline habitat information upon which the post-development biodiversity value set out herein is based.

1.7 This 'Design Stage' BNG Assessment aims to:

- Confirm whether planning permission sought for the development, if granted, would be subject to the Biodiversity Gain Condition as set out within the Environment Act (2021) [see Box 1].
- Provide information about "...the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the on-site habitat and any other habitat". Furthermore, evidence is provided as to how the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy, as set out in as set out in the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024), has been applied.
- Establish the following using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation, which uses habitat as a proxy for biodiversity and comprises three separate modules (Habitat Units, Hedgerow Units & Watercourse Units):
    - 'pre-development' (baseline) biodiversity value of the Site
    - 'post-development' (post-intervention) biodiversity value of the Site
    - Any off-site biodiversity values (baseline & post-intervention)
    - Net effect of the proposed development
    - Whether relevant 'trading' rules and other controls have been accorded with
    - Whether the Biodiversity Gain Objective (10%) is met or not
- State whether "...the biodiversity value of the on-site habitat will be lower on the date of application (or an earlier date) because of the carrying on of activities ('degradation') in which case the value is to be taken as immediately before the carrying on of the activities, and if degradation has taken place supporting evidence of this".
- State whether any on-site biodiversity provision is 'significant' and if so, how the specific gains would be secured for 30 years, in accordance with Paragraph 9, Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act (1990).

- Confirm the presence and location of any irreplaceable habitat at the Site, as set out in the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024).
- Clearly identify any assumptions made or deviation from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Guidance.
- Detail any legal frameworks for how Biodiversity Net Gain would be secured subject to grant of planning permission.

1.8 In accordance with the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations (2024) the following drawings have also been prepared:

- Stonehouse Business Park Habitats Plan (CSA/6746/102) provided in Appendix A
- Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building Habitats Plan (CSA/6746/118) provided in Appendix A
- Jackson's Ridge Habitats Plan (CSA/6746/120) provided in Appendix A
- Stonehouse Business Park Post-Development Habitats Plan (CSA/6746/129) provided in Appendix A
- Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building Post-Development Habitats Plan (CSA/6746/130) provided in Appendix B
- Jackson's Ridge Post-Development Habitats Plan (CSA/6746/131) provided in Appendix B

1.9 A final Biodiversity Gain Plan would be prepared to discharge the Biodiversity Gain Condition following the grant of any relevant consent.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY & LEGISLATION

2.1 The following legislation brings into force Schedule 14 of the Environment Act (2021), making Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) a condition of planning permission in England from 12 February 2024:

- The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Site Register (Financial Penalties and Fees) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Site Register Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2023) sets out existing government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, paragraph 180, states that the planning system and planning policies should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.

2.3 Accompanying the NPPF, central government guidance on the implementation of planning policies is set out within online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). That relating to the protection and enhancement of the Natural Environment was most recently updated in February 2024. The Natural Environment PPG addresses principles across a broad spectrum of topics targeting biodiversity conservation, from individual site and species protection through to the supporting of ecosystem services, and the use of local ecological networks to support the national Nature Recovery Network. In particular, the PPG promotes the delivery of measurable Biodiversity Net Gain through the creation and enhancement of habitats alongside development.

2.4 The following policy from the Horsham District Council Local Plan (2015) makes reference to biodiversity and the protection and enhancement of priority habitats and species:

<u>Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character</u>

"The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:

3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and

species, and ensures ***no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.***

3.0 METHODS

Biodiversity Calculations

3.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2024) was used to determine baseline (pre-development) and post-intervention (post-development) biodiversity values, and to calculate the net effect of the development upon biodiversity. Specifically, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool was populated and used to run all calculations present herein, and in accordance with the Statutory Metric User Guide (Defra, 2024).

3.2 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric uses habitat (vegetation and edaphic conditions) as a proxy for measuring biodiversity more widely. This reductive approach allows for the relative biodiversity 'value' of land to be calculated and expressed as transferrable 'Biodiversity Units'. The metric adopts the UK Habitat Classification (UK Hab; Butcher et al., 2023) system with some minor deviation.

3.3 The metric consists of a primarily 'Area' module which calculates 'Habitat Units' such as grassland, woodland and urban habitats, as well as two linear modules for 'Hedgerow Units' (including lines of trees) and 'Watercourse Units' (including rivers, canals and ditches). The separate Biodiversity Unit types cannot be converted between these modules and are addressed separately herein. For the purposes of this report, watercourses modules were not populated given the absence of these linear features from the Application sites.

3.4 'Habitat trading' controls are integrated into the Statutory Metric to ensure any losses of habitat are mitigated or compensated for appropriately, in respect of conservation priorities and ecological functionality. Any deviation from habitat trading is cleared flagged within the Statutory Metric, and justifications, where necessary, are set out herein.

3.5 Any consideration of temporary impacts, those where habitats can be reinstated within 2 years of impacts as set out within the User Guide, will are explained in full herein.

3.6 A Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool has been prepared for the proposed development and is provided separately in full for interrogation by Horsham District Council, relevant consultees and stakeholders.

3.7 All metric calculations have been reviewed by Clare Caudwell CEcol MCIEEM who has completed the 'Calculating and Using Biodiversity Units with Metric 2.0 CIEEM Training Course' (December 2019) and has completed numerous net gain assessments using iterations of the Metrics to the current Statutory Metric.

Baseline Habitats

3.8 The accompanying EcIA report (CSA/6746/06) provides details of the UKHab survey undertaken at the Site on 20 December 2023, and updated in July 2024, including full survey methods.

3.9 Baseline (pre-development) habitat areas and linear measurements were taken from the Baseline Habitats Plan (Appendix A) prepared in mapping software Quantum Geographic Information Systems (QGIS). Mapping is based upon field survey, topographical survey, aerial photography and OS mapping to an accuracy of 0.001ha for habitats and 5m for linear features.

Habitat & Hedgerow Condition Assessment

3.10 An assessment of habitat and hedgerow condition was undertaken on 18 and 23 July 2024 by Christian Gunn ACIEEM (Ucert in Species Identification) and Lydia Galbraith ACIEEM (FISC Level 3), in accordance with the Statutory Metric User Guide (Defra, 2024). Published condition assessment templates have been completed and are provided in Appendix C alongside wider condition information.

Post-Development Habitats

3.11 Post-development habitat areas and linear measurements were taken from the Proposed Habitats Plan made for each of the Application Sites (Appendix B) prepared in mapping software QGIS. These plans are based upon plans prepared by 3D Architecture Limited on behalf of Hunters Development Holdings Ltd (Stonehouse Business Park- 'Site Layout Plan As Proposed 2024/PL10/C', Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building- 'Site Layout Plan As Proposed 2024/PL7/C' and Jackson's Ridge- 'Proposed Site Plan 259101-110'). Wider consideration of construction methods, future land-use and management were used to determine the extent of existing habitat loss/deterioration, retention/enhancement and creation which would occur-post development.

3.12 Professional judgement was required throughout the calculation process to ensure target habitats were reasonable, achievable and ecologically justified. Habitat condition for both enhanced and created habitats was assigned taking a precautionary approach and with consideration of biotic and operational phase conditions (i.e. those which may limit the extent to which 'good' condition is likely to be reached).

Strategic Significance

3.13 A desktop assessment was undertaken to determine relevant strategic significance multipliers for pre- and post-development habitats in accordance with Table 7 of the Statutory Metric User Guide (Defra, 2024) with particular consideration of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).

Additionality & Wider Considerations

3.14 In accordance with the good practice principles as set out above, the following additional considerations have been given:

- Wider consideration of ecological functionality, with a qualitative ecological assessment presented herein
- Consideration of non-ecological stakeholders, such as end-users (e.g. residents) of the scheme and choices with regard to access and multi-functionality
- Identification of opportunities to deliver wider environmental gain (e.g. carbon sequestration, water quality and climate resilience) guiding habitat/design choices beyond certain ecological outcomes

Spatial Risk

3.15 When proposing off-site solutions to BNG, the Metric applies a 'Spatial Risk Multiplier'. The multiplier is based on whether the offset land is located within the same Local Planning Authority (LPA) or National Character Area (NCA) as the development site, or is "deemed to be sufficiently local, to the site of biodiversity loss". It has been assumed that the any off-site biodiversity units will be provided within the same Local Authority or Natural Character Area, as a low-risk multiplier has been selected within the metric calculator tool.

Assumptions & Limitations

3.16 Effort has been taken to ensure mapping, and measurements taken from mapping, are accurate to the level stated. However, given the nature of habitats, methods of field survey and the potential for inaccuracies in aerial photography and some other mapping, there remain some potential for errors in the calculations presented herein.

3.17 Professional judgement and a precautionary approach are required to establish baseline and post-development scenarios to assess current habitat type and condition, and to predict future changes. Accordingly outcomes for habitats and biodiversity more widely may differ from those presented herein.

3.18 Specific assumptions with regard to certain existing and proposed habitats have been identified where relevant throughout the report.

4.0 BASELINE BIODIVERSITY

4.1 For full habitat descriptions and species lists for each Application site, please refer to the EcIA (CSA/6746/08) with baseline habitats illustrated on the Habitats Plan (Appendix A). Appendix C sets out full details of habitat condition assessment including completed standard templates.

Strategic Significance

4.2 There is no published Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Horsham District Council. The following relevant alternative documents have been reviewed in respect of assigning significant strategic significance:

- Draft Horsham District Nature Recovery Network Report (2021)
- Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)
- Weald to Waves- The Corridor Map

4.3 All of the Application Sites fall within the Horsham District Nature Recovery Networks (NRN) (Wider Horsham District Project, 2021), being classified as having "High Habitat Potential", which are areas that have been identified due to their location and potential to provide connectivity between other sites.

4.4 The Site falls just outside of the Weald to Waves Corridor Radiant Zone. The Weald to Waves project aims to establish a nature recovery corridor from the High Weald to the Sussex coast. The Radiant Zone represents a 2km buffer either side of the Core Corridor Route, in which landholders are encouraged to pledge land to improve habitat connectivity. Parts of the wider landholding to the north falls into this Corridor Radiant Zone.

4.5 Based on the above, the majority of baseline Habitat Units are assigned as 'Medium' strategic significance, classified as "Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy".

4.6 The above approach has also been adopted for post-intervention (post-development) habitat units as set out below.

Baseline Biodiversity Units

4.7 A summary of the on-site habitat areas and baseline Biodiversity Units for each Application site, as calculated using the accompanying Statutory Biodiversity Metric are set out in Table 1A-1C below. These include Habitat and Hedgerow Units.

Table 1A. Summary of On-site Baseline Biodiversity Units for Stonehouse Business Park

HABITATS		
Habitat Type	**Area (ha)**	**Habitat Units**
Developed land; sealed surface	0.959	0.00
Sparsely vegetated land; ruderal/ephemeral	0.025	0.06
Modified grassland	0.064	0.14
Artificial unvegetated; sealed surface	0.032	0.00
Total*	**1.08**	**0.20**
HEDGEROWS		

Hedgerow Type	Length (km)	Hedgerow Units
H20a Line of Trees	0.028	0.06
H20b Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerow	0.035	0.04
H26a Native Hedgerow with Trees	0.057	0.75
H27a Species-Rich Native Hedgerow	0.118	1.56
H27b Species-Rich Native Hedgerow	0.097	1.28
H29 Native Hedgerow	0.056	0.37
H30 Line of Trees	0.035	0.15
Total	**0.43**	**4.21**

*Area measurements attributed to 'individual trees' are not included in the total area as trees oversail other habitats.

Table 1B. Summary of On-site Baseline Biodiversity Units for **Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building**

HABITATS		
Habitat Type	**Area (ha)**	**Habitat Units**
Developed land; sealed surface	1.035	0.00
Sparsely vegetated land; ruderal/ephemeral	0.703	1.55
Modified grassland	0.601	1.13
Other neutral grassland	0.3	1.32
Priority pond (non-priority habitat)	0.002	0.01
Total*	**2.46ha**	**3.46**
HEDGEROWS		
Hedgerow Type	**Length (km)**	**Hedgerow Units**
H10a Species-rich native hedgerow- associated with bank or ditch	0.125	2.48
H10c Native hedgerow	0.005	0.03
H13 Native hedgerow	0.111	0.73
H28 Native hedgerow	0.35	2.31
Total	**0.59km**	**5.55**

*Area measurements attributed to 'individual trees' are not included in the total area as trees oversail other habitats.

Table 1C. Summary of On-site Baseline Biodiversity Units for **Jackson's Ridge**

HABITATS		
Habitat Type	**Area (ha)**	**Habitat Units**
Developed land; sealed surface	0.166	0.00
Bramble scrub	0.005	0.02
Mixed scrub	0.174	0.77
Modified grassland	0.019	0.04
Sparsely vegetated land; ruderal/ephemeral	0.127	0.28
Total*	**0.49**	**1.11**
HEDGEROWS		
Hedgerow Type	**Length (km)**	**Hedgerow Units**
H1- Line of trees	0.103	0.45
H8- Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.045	0.05
Total	**0.15**	**0.50**

*Area measurements attributed to 'individual trees' are not included in the total area as trees oversail other habitats.

Stonehouse Business Park

4.8 The entirety of the Site (100%) consists of 'low' or 'very low' distinctiveness habitats, including developed land; sealed surface and modified grassland.

4.9 In total 36% of the hedgerows on site consist of 'low' distinctiveness native hedgerows and lines of trees, with the remainder (64%) consisting of 'medium' distinctiveness native hedgerow with trees, or species-rich native hedgerow.

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building

4.10 The majority of the Site (88%) consists of 'low' or 'very low' distinctiveness habitats, including developed land; sealed surface, sparsely vegetated land and modified grassland. The remaining 12% of the Site comprises 'medium' distinctiveness habitat including other neutral grassland and pond (non-priority), making up 31% of the biodiversity value of the Site.

4.11 The majority of hedgerows on Site (78%) consist of 'low' distinctiveness native hedgerows, with the remainder (22%) consisting of 'high' distinctiveness species-rich native hedgerow- associated with ditch or bank.

Jackson's Ridge

4.12 A large proportion (64%) of the Site consists of 'low' and 'very low' distinctiveness habitat, including developed land; sealed surface, sparsely vegetated land and modified grassland. A smaller proportion (36%) consists of 'medium' distinctiveness bramble scrub and mixed scrub, making up 71% of the overall biodiversity value of the Site.

4.13 Overall, 70% of the hedgerow features on site consist of 'low' distinctiveness line of trees, the remaining consisting of 'very low' non-native and ornamental hedgerow.

5.0 POST-INTERVENTION BIODIVERSITY

5.1 The proposed development comprises the following:

- **Stonehouse Business Park:** Rationalisation and enhancement of existing commercial facilities (Use Classes E(g) B2 and B8 at Stonehouse Business Park including demolition of two buildings and their replacement with new Class E(g), B2 and B8 facilities. Extension of existing building to form a new office and wardens' accommodation. Existing mobile home removed. The following impact assessment is based on the Site Layout Plan As Proposed (3D Architecture Ltd Ref: 2024/PL10/C)

- **Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building:** Decommissioning of the Anaerobic Digester and re-use of the existing 2no buildings for storage and office uses (Class E (g) and B8) and the diversion of a public footpath. The following impact assessment is based on the Site Layout Plan As Proposed (3D Architecture Ltd; Ref: 2024/PL7/C).

- **Jackson's Ridge:** Residential redevelopment of the Jacksons Farm site including the demolition of existing barns to provide 3no. dwellings with access, parking, and landscaping. The following impact assessment is based on the 'Proposed Site Plan' (Lloyd Harden; Ref: 259101-110).

- The Site-Wide Masterplan (CSA/6746/111/H) shows these proposals in relation to one another, as well as indicative proposals for habitat creation and enhancement across the wider landholding which may be delivered as part of a future 'Habitat Bank' proposal.

5.2 The proposed schemes were subject to an iterative design process over (Dec 2023 to January 2025) with the following specific aims and advice provided in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy:

- Minimise necessary losses of hedgerows for vehicular and pedestrian access
- Enhancement of buffer planting landscaping alongside development
- Reduced quantum of development in Jackson's Ridge to allow retention of grassland features (moved outside of the red line)

5.3 Post-intervention habitats are illustrated on the Proposed Habitats Plans in Appendix B. These drawing is based upon development parameters set out within plans prepared by 3D Architecture Limited on behalf of Hunters Development Holdings Ltd (Stonehouse Business Park- 'Site Layout Plan As Proposed 2024/PL10/C', Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building- 'Site Layout Plan As Proposed 2024/PPLL7/C') and Jackson's Ridge- 'Proposed Site Plan 259101-110' as prepared by Llyod Harden). The following assumptions have been made

with regard to these plans in line with the Statutory Metric User Guide (Defra, 2024) and professional judgement taking a precautionary approach where necessary:

Stonehouse Business Park

- Modified grassland within the centre of the site is to be retained
- Modified grassland parcels in the north west of the site are to be created
- A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) is to be created in the north-west of the Site
- All individual trees are assumed to be 'small' in size, and in poor condition for 'urban'/street contexts

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building

- Other neutral grassland to the north of the buildings is to be retained (temporary impacts only from installation of below ground water storage tanks)
- Grassland created in the west and the south of the buildings is to be other neutral grassland in 'poor' condition
- Modified grassland to the east of the buildings (parcel of F6) is to be enhanced from 'poor' to 'moderate' condition
- All individual trees are assumed to be 'small' in size, and in poor condition for 'urban'/street contexts

Jackson's Ridge

- Whilst the scrub along the eastern boundary is not anticipated to be lost due to the development, it has been assumed to be lost and recreated as 'vegetated garden', due to the residential nature of the proposals, and the fact that the retention of habitat for 30 years (as per the BNG requirements) cannot be secured within a privately owned garden.

5.4 On-site habitat retention, enhancement and creation set out below would be secured through control of detailed development/landscape design, a Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP)/ Biodiversity Gain Plan and appropriate application of a planning condition or legal condition.

Habitat Retention & Enhancement

5.5 The majority of area habitats at the Jackon's Business Park and Jackson's Ridge sites will be lost to development, comprising principally urban habitats, with the majority of linear habitats retained. The following habitats will be retained and/or enhanced:

Stonehouse Business Park

- c. 0.031ha of modified grassland will be retained
- c. 426m of hedgerow and tree line will be retained

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building

- c. 0.22ha of other neutral grassland will be retained
- c. 0.509ha of modified grassland will be enhanced from 'poor' to 'moderate' condition
- The existing ephemeral pond will be retained
- c. 620m of hedgerow will be retained

Jackson's Ridge

- c. 103m of line of trees will be retained
- c. 45m of non-native ornamental hedgerow will be retained

5.6 As set out within the accompanying EcIA the retention of these habitats will require protections during construction and in operation through the following:

- Tree protection measures in line with standard arboricultural practice (BS5837: 2012)
- Construction Environmental Management Plan, to include standard pollution control measures to be implemented during construction
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).

5.7 Enhancement works would be delivered and secured through a HMMP. Details of habitat condition criteria to be targeted are provided within the accompany Metrics.

Habitat Creation

5.8 As part of the proposed development, the following habitats will be created:

Stonehouse Business Park

- c. 0.135ha of modified grassland in 'poor' condition
- c. 0.024ha of SuDS basin in 'moderate' condition
- c. 0.0326ha of urban trees (8 small trees) in 'poor' condition
- c. 0.091km of species rich native hedgerow with trees in 'good' condition

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building

- c. 0.264ha of other neutral grassland in 'poor' condition
- c. 0.336ha of modified grassland in 'poor' condition
- c. 0.03ha of SuDS basin in 'moderate' condition
- c. 0.0692ha of urban trees (17 small trees) in 'poor' condition
- c. 0.022km of native hedgerow in 'good' condition
- c. 0.094km of species rich native hedgerow with trees in 'good' condition
- c. 0.104km of species rich native hedgerow in 'good' condition

Jackson's Ridge

- c. 0.279ha of vegetated garden (no condition applicable)

Strategic Significance

5.9 An equivalent approach to strategic significance as been taken for post-intervention Biodiversity Units as for baseline units above, with all grassland, tree, pond and vegetated garden habitats having 'medium' strategic significance.

Significant On-site Gain

5.10 The creation of habitats of medium distinctiveness including other neutral grassland, individual trees and native hedgerows are likely to be considered 'significant' by Horsham District Council.

5.11 In accordance with Paragraph 9, Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) these habitats contributing to significant on-site gains require additional mechanisms to secure their creation/enhancement and management over 30-years, such as through an appropriate planning condition and/or legal agreement in accordance with an on-site HMMP.

6.0 OFF-SITE BIODIVERSITY

6.1 Off-Site land will be required to deliver the Habitat Units and Hedgerow Units needed to achieve a 10% net gain (a Habitat Unit deficit of 0.63 remains, as well as a 0.05 Hedgerow Unit deficit), and satisfy the trading error for medium distinctiveness, at Jackson's Ridge.

6.2 Proposals are coming forward to register the wider landholding at Stonehouse Farm as a "Habitat Bank", in which the required off-Site Habitat Units could be registered and allocated to the proposed development at Jackson's Ridge. However, off-Site units could equally be purchased from a separate off-Site provider.

6.3 The Habitat Bank (Phase 1) occupies an area of c. 17.15ha, and comprises a series of modified grassland fields, associated boundary hedgerow and tree lines, woodland and a stream (as shown on the Site-Wide Masterplan CSA/6476/111).

6.4 The offset Site, either located within the proposed Habitat Bank or located by an additional off-Site provider, will be subject to the creation of c. 0.09ha of mixed scrub in 'good' condition, from a modified grassland baseline (in 'poor' condition) (or alternatively, a smaller area of higher distinctiveness habitat), and the creation of c. 0.015km of native hedgerow (in 'good' condition) (or alternatively, a smaller length of higher distinctiveness hedgerow).

6.5 The offset Site, if not located within the proposed Habitat Bank, would ideally be located in a strategically significant location based upon the following:

- Draft Horsham District Nature Recovery Network Report (2021)
- Weald to Waves- The Corridor Map

6.6 The above works will deliver 0.63 Habitat Units and 0.06 Hedgerow Units as set out within the accompanying Statutory Metric.

6.7 The proposed works at the offset Site will be subject to registration via the Biodiversity Gain Site Register which will require preparation of an HMMP setting out works required for 30 years and secured through appropriate legal mechanisms. Subject to this registration, Biodiversity Units delivered can be allocated to the proposed development as set out below.

7.0 NET EFFECT ON BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity Units

7.1 The net effect on biodiversity as a result of the proposed development is set out within the accompanying Statutory Biodiversity Metric and summarised below in Tables 2A-2B, 3A-B and 4A-B. Table 5A-5B summaries the results if both applications were taken together.

Table 2A. Net Effect on Biodiversity at Stonehouse Business Park: Habitat Units

	Habitat Units	**% Change**
On-site baseline	0.20	
On-site post-intervention	0.52	
On-site net change	**+0.33**	**+166.07%**
Trading Rules Satisfied		

Table 2B. Net Effect on Biodiversity Stonehouse Business Park: Hedgerow Units

	Hedgerow Units	**% Change**
On-site baseline	4.21	
On-site post-intervention	5.00	
Total net change	**+0.78**	**+18.59%**
Trading Rules Satisfied		

Table 3A. Net Effect on Biodiversity at Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building: Habitat Units

	Habitat Units	**% Change**
On-site baseline	4.20	
On-site post-intervention	4.97	
On-site net change	**+0.77**	**+18.37%**
Trading Rules Satisfied		

Table 3B. Net Effect on Biodiversity Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building: Hedgerow Units

	Hedgerow Units	**% Change**
On-site baseline	6.76	
On-site post-intervention	8.45	
Total net change	**+1.70**	**+25.10%**
Trading Rules Satisfied		

Table 4A. Net Effect on Biodiversity at Jackson's Ridge: Habitat Units

	Habitat Units	**% Change**
On-site baseline	1.11	
On-site post-intervention	0.59	
Total net change	**-0.52**	**-46.58%**
*Trading Rules **Not** Satisfied*		

Table 4B. Net Effect on Biodiversity at Jackson's Ridge: Hedgerow Units

	Hedgerow Units	**% Change**
On-site baseline	0.50	
On-site post-intervention	0.50	
On-site net change	**0.00**	**0.00%**
Trading Rules Satisfied		

7.2 It is demonstrated that the proposed developments at Stonehouse Business Park and the Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building will result in a gain in excess of the 10% for Habitat Units and Hedgerow Units with all relevant trading rules satisfied.

7.3 Jackson's Ridge has resulted in a net loss of -0.52 Habitat Units (-46.58%), and a net zero for Hedgerow Units. The creation of c. 0.09ha of mixed scrub in good condition, and c. 0.015km of native hedgerow in good condition has been proposed to resolve the deficit and solve the trading error, although alternative habitat creation, e.g. smaller amounts of higher distinctiveness habitat/hedgerow type are also possible.

Qualitative Appraisal

7.4 A wider appraisal of the proposed development's effects upon biodiversity has been considered. This includes factors not fully captured through the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, which uses only habitat type and condition as a proxy for biodiversity, omitting important factors such as connectivity and functioning of habitats.

7.5 The baseline habitats present at each of the Application sites are dominated by development which have started to be colonised with vegetation, with areas of sparsely vegetated land over hardstanding, and encroaching scrub. All Application sites have boundary hedgerow and tree lines which are part of a hedgerow network in the wider landholding and beyond. Whilst the post-development habitats will be largely dominated by development, habitat creation has been targeted particularly at the periphery of the Application sites, in aim of strengthening and buffering the boundary hedgerows and tree lines and retaining connectivity to the local landscape.

8.0 MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

8.1 Full details of management and monitoring for delivery of on-site biodiversity gains will be provided within the Habitat Monitoring and Management Plan (HMMP) for a 30-year period. This HMMP includes the following principal elements:

- Establishment and management of the following 'significant' biodiversity gains:
    - Other neutral grasslands creation (Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building)
    - Species-rich native hedgerow creation (Stonehouse Business Park and Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building)
    - Tree planting (Stonehouse Business Park and Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building)
- Adaptive management options
- Monitoring regime and reporting process
- Roles and responsibilities
- Processes to ensure remedial measures can be undertaken in the event that target habitat or condition is not achieved

8.2 Off-site biodiversity gains will be appropriately registered through the Biodiversity Gain Register and subject to separate management and monitoring through the off-site HMMP, which will include/includes the following principal elements:

- Establishment and management of the following:
    - Scrub creation (off-Site provision for Jackson's Ridge)
- Adaptive management options
- Monitoring regime and reporting process
- Roles and responsibilities
- Processes to ensure remedial measures can be undertaken in the event that target habitat or condition is not achieved

9.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Planning permission sought for the proposed development will be subject to the Biodiversity Gain Condition in accordance with Schedule 14 of the Environment Act (2021).

9.2 As set out herein, a net gain in biodiversity in excess of 10% is predicted for Stonehouse Business Park and the Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building, based on the provision on on-site gains. A net loss is predicted for Jackson's Ridge, necessitating the requirement of off-Site biodiversity delivery, either from the proposed Stonehouse Farm Habitat Bank, or another off-set provider. Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool was used to calculate the following outcomes:

Stonehouse Business Park

- +0.33 Habitat Unit gain or +166.07% (on-Site provision only)
- +0.78 Hedgerow Unit gain or +18.59% (on-Site provision only)
- All relevant trading rules satisfied

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building

- +0.77 Habitat Unit gain or +18.37% (on-Site provision only)
- +1.70 Hedgerow Unit gain or +25.10% (on-Site provision only)
- All relevant trading rules satisfied

Jackson's Ridge

- -0.52 Habitat Units or -46.58%
- 0.00 Hedgerow Unit gain or net 0
- Relevant trading not rules satisfied
- A unit deficit of 0.63 Habitat Units, which would be satisfied by the creation of c. 0.09ha mixed scrub in 'good' condition, equating to a gain of 0.65 Habitat Units, and the creation of c. 0.015km of native hedgerow, equating to 0.06 Hedgerow Units

9.3 Following any grant of planning permission an application to discharge the Biodiversity Gain Condition would be submitted completing the Biodiversity Gain Plan. It is proposed the wording of any net gain condition identifies the biodiversity net gain requirements and provision for each part / phase of the proposed development separately; and with a sperate HMMP being prepared and implemented in relation to each part / phase of development.

9.4 On-site significant biodiversity gain would be secured through an appropriate legal mechanism (as such planning condition) subject to an on-site HMMP for a 30-year period. Off-site Biodiversity Units would be secured through registration under the Biodiversity Gain Register, and subject to a separate off-site HMMP.

10.0 REFERENCES

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Appendix A

Baseline Habitats Plans

N

- Site boundary
- Modified grassland (g4)
- Developed land. sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (u1c)
- Building reference
- Hedgerows (Priority Habitat) (h2a)
- Other Hedgerows (h2b)
- Line of trees (33)

0 25 50 m

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Project	Stonehouse Farm, Handcross	Date Feb 2025	Drawing No. CSA/6746/102
Drawing Title	Stonehouse Business Park, Habitats Plan	Scale Refer to scale	Rev C
Client	Lake Investment Ltd.	Drawn LG	Checked CC

N

- Site boundary
- Other neutral grassland (g3c)
- Modified grassland (g4)
- Developed land. sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Sparsely vegetated land (u1f)
- Pond (r, 41)
- Field/ Building reference

0 100 200 m

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Project	Stonehouse Farm, Handcross	Date Feb 2025	Drawing No. CSA/6746/118
Drawing Title	Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building Habitats Plan	Scale Refer to scale	Rev C
Client	Lake Investment Ltd.	Drawn LG	Checked CC

N

- Site boundary
- Modified grassland (g4)
- Bramble scrub (h3d)
- Mixed scrub (h3h)
- Developed land. sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Sparsely vegetated land (u1f)
- Other Hedgerows (h2b)
- Line of trees (33)
- Building reference

0 25 50 m

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Project	Stonehouse Farm, Handcross	Date	Feb 2025	Drawing No.	CSA/6746/120
Drawing Title	Jackson's Ridge Habitats Plan	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	B
Client	Lake Investment Ltd.	Drawn	LG	Checked	CC

Appendix B

Proposed Habitats Plans

N

- Site boundary
- Modified grassland (g4)
- Developed land. sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (u1c)
- Sustainable drainage system (SuDS) (848)
- Building reference
- Hedgerows (Priority Habitat) (h2a)
- Other Hedgerows (h2b)
- Line of trees (33)
- Newly planted tree

0 25 50 m

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Project	Stonehouse Farm, Handcross	Date Feb 2025	Drawing No. CSA/6746/129
Drawing Title	Stonehouse Business Park Proposed Habitats Plan	Scale Refer to scale	Rev A
Client	Lake Investment Ltd.	Drawn LG	Checked CC

N

- Site boundary
- Other neutral grassland (g3c)
- Modified grassland (g4)
- Developed land. sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Pond (non-priority) (r1, 41)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) (848)
- Field reference
- Hedgerows (Priority Habitat) (h2a)
- Newly planted trees

0 100 200 m

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Project	Stonehouse Farm, Handcross	Date Feb 2025	Drawing No. CSA/6746/130
Drawing Title	Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building Proposed Habitats Plan	Scale Refer to scale	Rev A
Client	Lake Investment Ltd.	Drawn LG	Checked CC

N

- Site boundary
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Developed land. sealed surface (u1b)
- Vegetated garden (u, 828)
- Other Hedgerows (h2b)
- Line of trees (33)

0 25 50 m

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Project	Stonehouse Farm, Handcross	Date Feb 2025	Drawing No. CSA/6746/130
Drawing Title	Jackson's Ridge Proposed Habitats Plan	Scale Refer to scale	Rev -
Client	Lake Investment Ltd.	Drawn LG	Checked CC

Appendix C

Habitat & Hedgerow Condition Assessments

Habitat Condition Sheet: **GRASSLAND – LOW DISTINCTIVENESS**

Condition Assessment Criteria			Pass?			
			Habitat Parcel			
			Application 2	Application 4		Application 5
			Two grassland parcels	F6	F7	NE corner
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 present, including at least 2 forbs. **Note – this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.**		No	No	No	No
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7cm and at least 20% is more than 7cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.		No	No	No	No
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. may be present). Note – patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	Physical damage 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.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
E	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Condition Assessment Result						
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including essential criterion A		Good (3)				
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including essential criterion A		Moderate (2)				
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; **OR** Passes 4 – 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)		Poor (1)	✓	✓	✓	✓

Habitat Condition Sheet: **GRASSLAND – MEDIUM, HIGH & VERY HIGH DISTINCTIVENESS**

sment Criteria			Pass?	
			Habitat Parcel	
			Application 4	
			F8	Central parcel
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description). **Note – this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.**		No	No
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7cm and at least 20% is more than 7cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.		Yes	No
C	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.		Yes	Yes
D	Cover of bracken is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble) is less than 5%.		Yes	No
E	Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition 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 (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.		No	No
Additional Group (Non-acid types only)				
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m^2 present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type. **Note – this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition (non-acid grassland types only).**		No	No
Condition Assessment Result				
Acid Grassland Types (out of 5 criteria)				
Passes 5 criteria		Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)		
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criteria A and 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 essential criteria A and F.		Poor (1)	✓	✓

Habitat Condition Sheet: **LINE OF TREES**

Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass?		
		Ref.		
		Application 2		Application 5
		H20a	H30	H1
A	At least 70% of trees are native species.	No	Yes	Yes
B	Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.	No	No	Yes
C	One or more trees has veteran features and or natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates, such as presence of standing and attached deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	Yes	No
D	There is an undisturbed naturally-vegetated strip of at least 6 m on both sides to protect the line of trees from farming and other human activities (excluding grazing). Where veteran trees are present, root protection areas should follow standing advice.	No	No	No
E	At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition (deadwood or veteran features valuable for wildlife are excluded from this). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)			
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		✓	✓
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	✓		

Habitat Condition Sheet: **HEDGEROW**

Condition Assessment Criteria										
A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the 'favourable condition' criteria. This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook and Favourable Conservation Status document. For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook. Best practice would be to record the species, age, spacing and other key information about all trees present along a hedgerow within the 'Habitat Description' box, as well as other key features of the hedgerow.									
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes				**Pass?**						
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)*		**Criteria (the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'**	**Description**	**Hedgerow Ref.**						
				Application 2				**Application 4**		
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				**H20a**	**H26a**	**H27a/ H27b**	**H29**	**H10a**	**H13**	**H28**
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

			four years (if undertaken according to good practice).							
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles *Urtica* spp., cleavers *Galium aparine* and docks *Rumex* spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website, as well as the BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

			native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.							
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only										
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.		No			Yes	Yes	Yes
E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.		Yes			Yes		
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees										
No more than 2 failures in total; **AND** No more than 1 failure in any functional group.			Good (3)	✓		✓	✓		✓	
No more than 4 failures in total; **AND** <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).			Moderate (2)							

Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; **OR** Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	Poor (1)							
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees								
No more than 2 failures in total; **AND** No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	Good (3)		✓			✓	✓	
No more than 5 failures in total; **AND** Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	Moderate (2)							
Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; **OR** Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	Poor (1)							

Habitat Condition Sheet: **SCRUB**

Condition Assessment Criteria		**Pass?**
		Application 5
		NW corner
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range). - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species, - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel *Corylus avellana*, common juniper *Juniperus communis*, sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* or box *Buxus sempervirens*, which can be up to 100% cover).	No
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran) shrubs are all present.	No
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Yes
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	No
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	No
Condition Assessment Result		
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	✓

Habitat Condition Sheet: **POND**

Condition Assessment Criteria		**Pass?**
		Application 4
Core criteria - applicable to all ponds (woodland and non-woodland):		**P5**
A	The pond is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution. Turbidity is acceptable if the pond is grazed by livestock.	No
B	There is semi-natural habitat (moderate distinctiveness or above) completely surrounding the pond, for at least 10 m from the pond edge for its entire perimeter.	No
C	Less than 10% of the water surface is covered with duckweed *Lemna* spp. or filamentous algae.	No
D	The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies, such as agricultural ditches or artificial pipework.	No
E	Pond water levels can fluctuate naturally throughout the year. No obvious artificial dams, pumps or pipework.	Yes
F	There is an absence of listed non-native plant and animal species.	No
G	The pond is not artificially stocked with fish. If the pond naturally contains fish, it is a native fish assemblage at low densities.	Yes
Additional criteria - only applicable to non-woodland ponds:		
H	Emergent, submerged or floating plants (excluding duckweed) cover at least 50% of the pond area which is less than 3 m deep.	No
I	The pond surface is no more than 50% shaded by adjacent trees and scrub.	Yes
Condition Assessment Result	**Condition Assessment Score**	
If 8 criteria assessed (woodland ponds):		
Passes 7 criteria	Good (3)	n/a
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Moderate (2)	n/a
Passes 4 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	n/a
If 10 criteria assessed (non-woodland ponds):		
Passes 9 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 6 to 8 criteria	Moderate (2)	
Passes 5 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	✓

Appendix D

Site Wide Masterplan

Jacksons Ridge

Located on the site of the former farm yard, Jacksons Ridge will deliver three high-quality homes, set within the verdant character of Hammerpond Road. Set back from the road, the new homes will continue the pattern of development and will create the opportunity for new tree planting.

To the rear of the new homes, the large gardens will follow the topography of the land and will be defined at their extents by black estate railings and native hedgerow planting. Having this filtered semi-permeable boundary treatment will allow the residents to 'borrow' the landscape, creating a visually seamless transition into the 'habitat mosaic' to the south. This was an idea originally laid out by Capability Brown of a 'borrowed landscape.' Hazel Hurdles (or similar) will create naturalistic separation and privacy to each individual home and will be further softened by native tree and shrub planting.

The new homes could include features such as bee and bat bricks, bird boxes and hedgehog highways to the garden fences.

1 MEADOW HABITAT

Extensive areas of meadow planting and management of existing habitats within these areas will create a space for wildlife to flourish. Opportunities for wildflower to be sown throughout the meadows will attract insects and pollinators, along with other local wildlife. Opportunities for recreational routes though these meadows will bring users of the routes closer to nature. Specific species of meadow mixes will compliment the local landscape.

4 SCRUB PLANTING HABITAT

Scrub and thicket planting will create an ecotone in the foreground to the new woodland creation. These areas will be left to grow creating a naturalised character attracting a variety of wildlife, Native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle, buckthorn, blackberry and elderflower will be strengthened by native tree planting including maple, wild cherry, rowan, crab apple, and other fruiting species, which will provide feeding opportunities for birds and insects.

Ecological enhancements such as bird and bat boxes, log piles and hibernacula will create areas for nesting and homes for insects and invertebrates. Meadow planting will be sown around the scrub planting to provide additional habitat for wildlife.

Lakes & Lodges

The existing fishing lakes will be retained as part of the proposals at Stonehouse Farm and will be enhanced by the management of the existing reed planting, and new native tree planting. The areas will be encompassed by new woodland creation and scrub planting and will be the focus for the recreation offering of the proposals. The new circular permissive footway will meander through this area and will offer people the opportunity to experience the lakeland setting and wetland character. The existing SuDS basins which are planted with reed beds are to be retained to form part of this space.

The new lodges will create a backdrop to the lakes with new woodland and meadow planting beyond. These lodges will create a space for people to enjoy the nature, wildlife, and beautiful setting of the lakes. Sympathetically designed to assimilate into the character of the areas, these wood lodges will be enhanced by new native tree, hedgerow, and shrub planting, with each individual lodge having its own private space for rest and relaxation.

Access to the lodges will be via the existing track which serves the fishing lake, with a new route to each individual lodges, to ensure easy and convenient access all year round.

Area of land to form an extension to Jackson Ridge and other neighbouring properties and will be set aside as wild flower and or pasture.

Native hedgerow planting will create new field boundaries and will provide ecological corridors for foraging wildlife

Existing stream to be retained and enhanced with new tree and wildflower planting

New circular permissive footway will create recreation benefits and will connect directly into the Public Footpath (1708)

To ensure Stonehouse Farm and Lakes are truly sustainable, each commercial building will have solar panels installed to their roofs

Existing farm and commercial yard to be redeveloped to form an energy efficient business park comprising of a number of sensitively designed units directed at small rural based enterprises.

Lakes

Lakes

Lakes

HAMMERPOND ROAD

HANDCROSS ROAD

B2110

HANDCROSS ROAD

Existing vehicular access to the Business Park and fishing lakes retained

Stonehouse Business Park

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant & Main Livestock Building

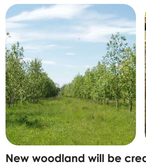
Significant saving in water use as a result of the proposed redevelopment exceeding water neutrality requirements

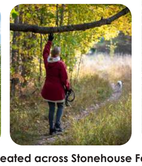
Scrapes will be formed at the low points of the Site to provide a wetland habitats for wildlife

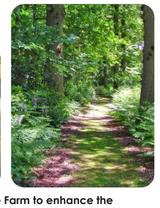
Existing footpath (1708) is to be retained along the new route as shown and enhanced by the new circular permissive footway

Existing vehicular access to Green Energy Park retained

2 WOODLAND CREATION







New woodland will be created across Stonehouse Farm to enhance the surrounding Ancient and Broadleaved woodlands. Continuing woodland along the stream corridor will enhance important wildlife corridors and create spaces for a variety of wildlife, fauna, and flora to establish. New native tree planting will provide immediate impact set against the backdrop of the woodland, as it establishes and matures over time.

A mix of native species to the area, such as English Oak, Beech, birch, hazel, and wild cherry will create habitats with seasonal interest. The woodland will be managed over time to ensure a healthy and successful woodland is achieved. Ground cover and thicket panting will create a diverse variety of habitats at different heights. There may be opportunities in the future to extend the recreational routes, to create woodland trails for those using the 'Lakes & Lodges' and the Public Right of Way.

3 'HABITAT MOSAIC'

These areas of Stonehouse Farm & Lakes will provide the greatest variety of habitats with a mosaic of rough grassland, scrub, and thicket planting, set against a backdrop of new woodland creation and meadow planting, will create a landscape suitable for a range of wildlife. Important wildlife corridors will be enhanced with new native tree planting to ensure flight corridors for foraging species are respected.

New native hedgerows will redefine field patterns and will define areas of rough grassland and wildflower planting. Other ecological enhancement could be provided within these areas, including bat and bird boxes (barn owls), hibernacula, and log piles to attract invertebrates and insects.

The existing Public Footpath will be 'screened' by new scrub planting to try and restrict public access, but views will still be afforded along its extent.

N

0 20 40 60 80 100 m

- Site Boundary: **Aprx. 37.36ha/ 93.32ac**
- Existing Vegetation
- Existing On-Site Fishing Ponds
- Reed Bed Planting (Indicative)
- Existing Watercourses
- Public Right of Way **(PROW 1708)**
- Electricity Lines & Pylons

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

- Woodland Planting Mix
- Thicket/ Scrub Planting
- Extra Heavy Standard Tree Planting
- Standard Tree Planting
- Multi-Stem Tree Planting
- Wildflower Meadow Mix
- Rough Grassland
- Native Shrub Planting
- Wetland Scrapes
- Proposed Circular Permissive Footway

BUILT DEVELOPMENT

- Existing Buildings Retained
- Proposed Dwellings at 'Jackson's Residence'
- Proposed Lake Lodges
- Proposed New/Extended Business Units
- Solar Panels to Commercial Buildings & Energy Park
- Hard Standing/ Existing Access Routes
- Black Metal Estate Railings
- Hazel Hurdles (or similar) Garden Separation

Stonehouse FARM AND LAKES

Rev	Date	By	Description
I	28.02.25	JC	Amended with client comments
H	04.02.25	JC	Amended with client comments
G	19.12.24	JC	Amended with client comments
F	16.12.24	JC	Amended with client comments
E	17.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
D	17.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
C	10.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
B	09.04.24	JC	Amended with Ecology inputs

Drawing Status
FOR PLANNING

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Project	Stonehouse Farm, Handcross Road **HORSHAM**
Drawing Title	Site-Wide Masterplan
Client	The Hunter Group (Lee Goossens)
Scale @ A1	1:2500
Drawing No.	CSA/6746/111
Date	April 2024
Rev	I
Drawn	JC
Checked	RR

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