

Impact & Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Mannings Heath Golf Club, Horsham
July 2026

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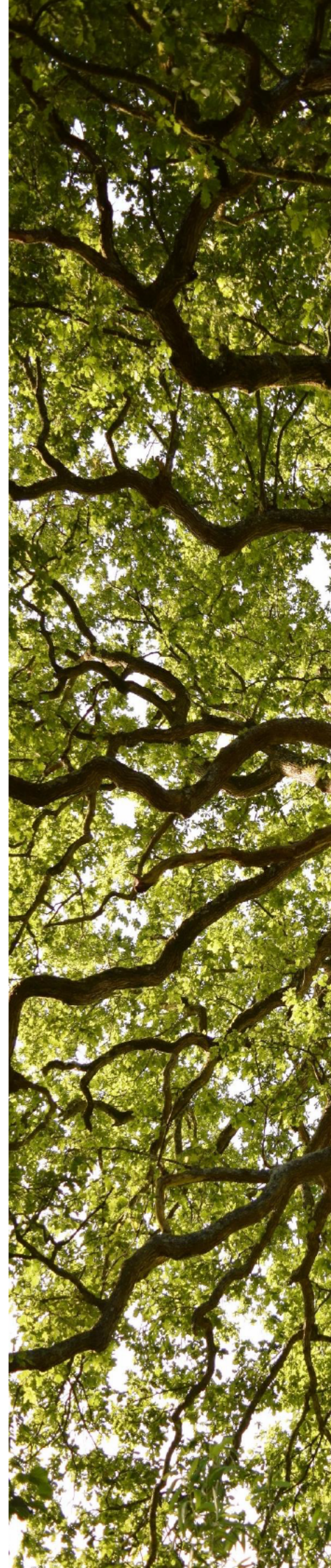
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1.0. SUMMARY

Kent Sussex Ecology was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment for a proposed GolfPod development at Mannings Heath Golf Club, West Sussex. The site primarily comprises heavily managed, species-poor modified grassland, hardstanding and gravel surfaces. An on-site survey was conducted to evaluate baseline ecological conditions, assess the potential presence of protected species, and determine the likely ecological impacts of the proposed development.

No evidence of protected species was observed during the survey, and the site itself offers limited habitat opportunities. Consequently, no further surveys have been recommended prior to development. However, precautionary mitigation measures should be implemented during the construction and operational phases to safeguard local wildlife. These include scheduling vegetation clearance outside the bird nesting season, adhering to sensitive lighting strategies to avoid disrupting foraging bats and safely covering excavations overnight to protect transient terrestrial protected species.

A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment was undertaken using the small sites metric. It has been demonstrated that the development can achieve the mandatory 10% uplift through the creation of mixed scrub, enhancement of the existing grassland and the planting of 25 small trees.



Site location plan.



2.0. INTRODUCTION

2.1. OVERVIEW

- 2.1.1. Kent Sussex Ecology was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at 'Mannings Heath Golf Club', Hammerpond Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6PG (site centred at TQ210293).
- 2.1.2. The site (redline boundary) is 0.34 hectares and comprises a mosaic of frequently mown, species-poor modified grassland interspersed with hardstanding and unsealed gravel surfaces, bordered by native hedgerow and a small group of mature broadleaved trees. The proposed development is for a new GolfPod.
- 2.1.3. The site was subject to an on-site survey on 21st May 2026 in suitable weather conditions and in accordance with CIEEM guidance. The surveyor was Chris Brown BSc, a CIEEM-accredited ecologist with over 9 years' experience in professional ecology. Habitats were mapped in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification system (UKHab), along with the completion of the requisite condition assessments to inform future Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations. A desktop study was carried out using DEFRA's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website for records of site designations, habitat information and protected species.
- 2.1.4. A ground-level tree assessment was undertaken to evaluate the potential of on-site trees to support roosting bats, in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023). A visual inspection of all trees was conducted from ground level utilising close-focus binoculars and high-powered torches to identify potential roost features (PRFs), such as rot holes, splits and lifted bark, as well as search for direct evidence of bat occupation.
- 2.1.5. The objectives of this report are to:
 - Identify all relevant statutory and non-statutory designated sites and features of ecological significance within the site and its surroundings.
 - Assess the potential for the presence of protected species and species of principal conservation importance, important habitats, or other biodiversity features within the site and its surroundings.
 - Provide recommendations for, and undertake, further surveys as necessary.
 - Present the likely significance of ecological impacts from potential development.
 - Present any likely mitigation and compensation measures required in relation to the relevant legislation and policy.
- 2.1.6. The survey information of this report will remain valid for between 12 and 18 months, in accordance with current CIEEM guidance.
- 2.1.7. The BNG methodology and results are detailed in Section 5 of this report.



3.0. BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

3.1. DESIGNATED SITES

- 3.1.1. The site is not situated within or adjacent to a statutorily designated site for nature. The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape and the nearest designated site for nature is the 'St Leonard's Forest' Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located approximately 450m to the east and north-west.

3.2. HABITATS

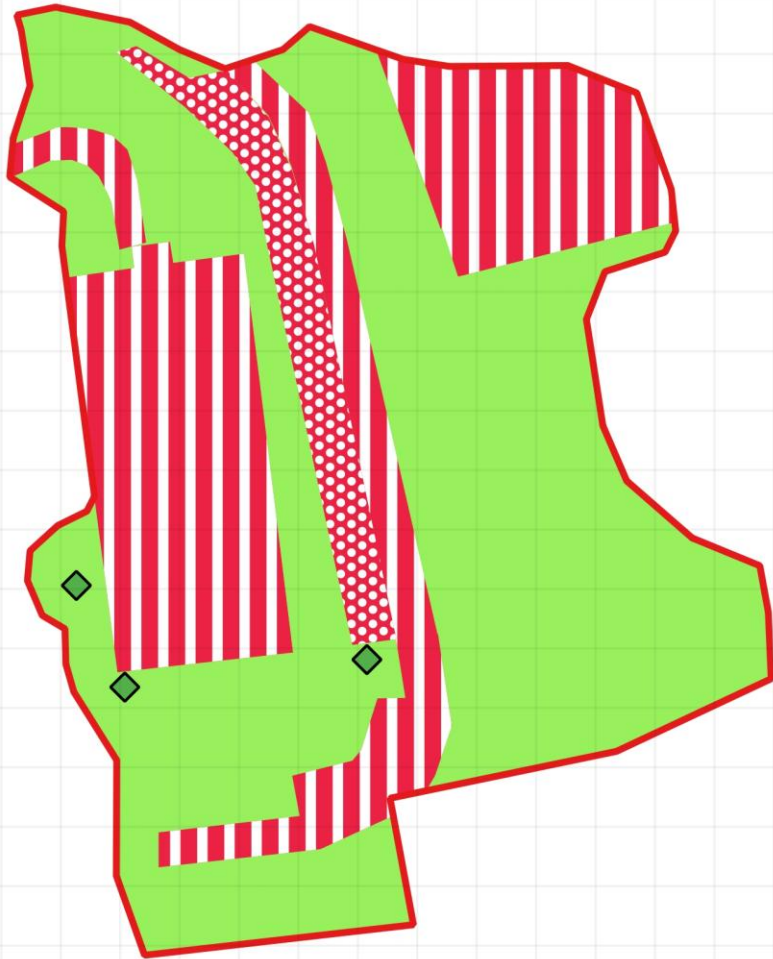
- 3.2.1. The dominant vegetated habitat across the surveyed parcel of land is modified grassland. The sward is subject to frequent management (mowing), resulting in a uniform height of 5-10cm. The habitat is species-poor, supporting an average of five species per square metre. The botanical composition includes perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), and cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), alongside common herbaceous species such as dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) and germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*).
- 3.2.2. Areas of hardstanding are present within the site, comprising a tennis court, an associated pedestrian path, access roads for golf buggies and a small section of a car park situated to the north-east. These areas are completely devoid of vegetation. A gravel parking area utilised for golf buggies is present. This surface is largely unvegetated, though occasional small patches of shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) are present, accounting for less than 10% of the total surface cover.
- 3.2.3. Just outside the current redline boundary, a native hedgerow (unconnected to the wider landscape) runs along just over half the length of the tennis court. The hedgerow measures approximately 4m in height and 2m in width. It is structurally intact, exhibiting no gaps within the canopy or at the base, and contains no mature hedgerow trees. A group of seven small broadleaved trees is present within the modified grassland habitat, comprising four silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and three oak (*Quercus* sp.), which are included within the redline boundary. Two medium sized trees are also included, to the south-west of the existing tennis court.
- 3.2.4. Beyond the redline boundary, priority habitat deciduous woodland is located approximately 40m to the south and east.

3.3. PROTECTED SPECIES

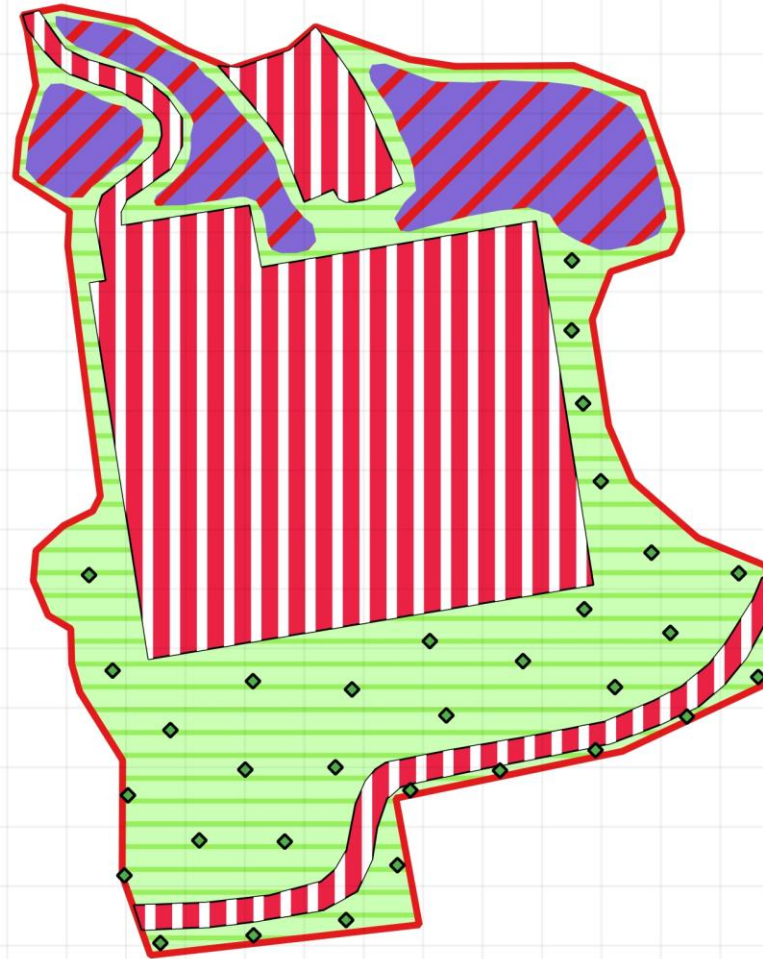
- 3.3.1. No evidence of protected species presence was observed during the site visit, and the site offers limited habitat opportunities for most protected species. Some protected species are considered further regarding their potential presence and susceptibility to impact from development activities.



- 3.3.2. The trees did not display potential roosting features (PRFs) such as cavities, crevices, and lifted bark. The site offers some foraging and commuting habitat for bats.
- 3.3.3. There is little to no suitable terrestrial habitat for protected species such as reptiles and Great Crested Newt. Regarding the latter, there are no ponds within 100m of the site. While there is one pond within 250m of the site, this is separated by a road and the built environment. Some protected terrestrial species, such as [REDACTED] hedgehogs, could commute and forage through the site.
- 3.3.4. The adjacent hedgerow and trees offer nesting potential for breeding birds found in the region.



Existing



Proposed

-  Redline boundary
-  Modified grassland
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Individual tree
-  Other neutral grassland
-  Mixed scrub

0 15 30 m



Mannings Heath Golf Club
Habitat Plan Rev C
Scale 1:600
11.06.2026

Reproduced with Google Satellite and QGIS



4.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. DESIGNATED SITES

- 4.1.1. Schedule 4(w) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 states that Natural England must be consulted on “development in or likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest”.
- 4.1.2. Paragraph 193(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 states that “development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest”.
- 4.1.3. Regarding the European designation (SPA and SAC), Article 6(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) states that “Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public”.
- 4.1.4. The site is not in an impact zone for any designated site where a development of this type triggers a consultation with Natural England. It is concluded that the proposed development will not impact any designated site and, as such, no further recommendations have been made.
- 4.1.5. Regarding the National Landscape, developments must be carefully designed to protect the High Weald's characteristic habitat networks, ensuring that any biodiversity implications are ecologically appropriate and directly support the broader conservation objectives of the designated landscape.

4.2. HABITATS

- 4.2.1. Certain habitat types are listed as ‘habitats of principal importance’, or ‘priority habitats’, under the NERC Act 2006. In accordance with Section 41 of the Act, these habitats are capable of being a material consideration in the making of planning decisions (Paragraph 84, Government Circular (ODPM 06/2005)). Additionally, ancient woodland benefits from some protection through the National Planning Policy Framework, which states development resulting in the loss or deterioration of this habitat should not be permitted unless there are wholly exceptional reasons.



- 4.2.2. There are no priority or otherwise notable habitats within the redline boundary. The proposals include the retention of the boundary hedgerow and trees, with only the modified grassland (and gravel) being replaced with a sealed surface (see habitat plan on page 7).
- 4.2.3. This development's habitat impacts are primarily addressed in the BNG section of this report (Section 5). Regardless, NPPF policies pertaining to biodiversity enhancements still apply. As such, any soft landscaping should consist of native species only to further safeguard the ecological integrity of the area.

4.3. PROTECTED SPECIES

- 4.3.1. Paragraph 99 of the ODPM 06/2005 states that "it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision".
- 4.3.2. It is concluded that no further surveys for protected species are necessary based on the current proposed plans. The implementation of precautionary mitigation measures is considered sufficient to negate any potential harm or disturbance to protected species, as detailed further on.

4.4. BATS

- 4.4.1. All bat species and their roosts are strictly protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation makes it a criminal offence to deliberately or recklessly capture, injure, kill, or disturb a bat, or damage, destroy, or obstruct access to a bat roost, regardless of whether bats are present at the time.
- 4.4.2. Any new external lighting required for the development must be sensitively designed to avoid negative impacts on local biodiversity, particularly nocturnal species such as bats, [REDACTED] and invertebrates. To achieve this, the lighting scheme must be designed in accordance with the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) and Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. The following core principles should be integrated into the external lighting strategy:
- External lighting should only be installed where strictly necessary. Dark corridors must be maintained along the site boundaries, particularly regarding the nearby priority habitat woodland.
 - Light must be directed strictly downwards and only where needed. Luminaires should be mounted as low as possible (below eaves height) with a 0° upward tilt and 0% Upward Light Ratio to prevent light spill. Hoods, cowls or louvres should be used to precisely direct light and prevent vertical and horizontal spill onto adjacent vegetation.
 - All luminaires must utilise warm-white LED bulbs with a Correlated Colour Temperature (CCT) of 2700 Kelvin or lower. This minimises the emission of blue and ultraviolet (UV) wavelengths, which are highly disruptive to bat flight paths and



attractive to nocturnal invertebrates. Light intensity should be kept to the lowest safe minimum.

- Any security lighting must be operated via passive infrared (PIR) motion sensors set to a short timer (maximum of 1 minute) to ensure habitats are only illuminated during brief periods of human activity. A curfew should be implemented to ensure no illumination throughout the entire night.

4.5. GREAT CRESTED NEWT

- 4.5.1. Great Crested Newts and their habitats (both aquatic and terrestrial) are legally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to deliberately or recklessly kill, injure, capture, or disturb a Great Crested Newt (GCN), or damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places.
- 4.5.2. In assessing the potential impact on GCN, the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment tool was utilised. Given the proposed development footprint is highly restricted and there is only a single pond located within 250 metres of the site, the tool calculates a 'green: offence highly unlikely' result. Consequently, the risk of committing an offence is negligible. The results assume the implementation of precautionary mitigation measures for the construction phase of the development.
- 4.5.3. A precautionary approach for GCN must be implemented during construction. This will include maintaining the sward at a short length up to the construction phase to deter amphibians from entering the area. All building materials and waste must be stored off the ground on pallets or hardstanding to avoid creating temporary refugia, and any open excavations must be covered overnight or provided with shallow-angled timber escape ramps to prevent animals becoming trapped. In the unlikely event that GCN is discovered on site, all works in that area must cease immediately, and a qualified ecologist must be contacted for advice.

4.6. NESTING BIRDS

- 4.6.1. All wild birds, their active nests, and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird, or to take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- 4.6.2. All vegetation clearance should be scheduled outside the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). If works must proceed during this window, a qualified ecologist must conduct a nesting bird check within 24 hours prior to clearance. Any active nests identified must be protected by an appropriate buffer zone until the young have fledged. Ecological enhancements, such as integrated nest boxes on the new building or retained trees, should be incorporated into the final design.



4.7. BADGERS (AND HEDGEHOGS)

- 4.7.1. Badgers and their setts are comprehensively protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which makes it an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, or disturb a badger, or to damage, destroy, or obstruct access to a sett. Additionally, the West European hedgehog is listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requiring Local Planning Authorities to consider their conservation during the planning process.
- 4.7.2. Precautionary measures are recommended during construction to protect transient nocturnal mammals. Any deep excavations must be covered overnight or provided with a shallow-angled ramp to allow trapped animals to escape. All pipework over 150mm in diameter must be capped at night.



5.0. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

5.1. OVERVIEW

- 5.1.1. A BNG assessment was carried out in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). The site and proposed development meet the criteria for the 'small sites metric', being 0.5ha or smaller in size. As such, the small sites metric (SSM) calculation tool was used for the assessment. The guidance in Natural England's 'The Small Sites Metric (Biodiversity Metric 4.0) User Guide' was followed to ensure the correct procedure was implemented. Unlike the main metric calculation tool, the SSM calculation tool's habitat conditions are fixed and cannot be altered.
- 5.1.2. There are four rules that must be met in order for the metric results to be valid. In general terms, these are:
- Completion of the metric (and baseline habitat assessment) by a competent person(s);
 - The three types of biodiversity units generated cannot be summed together for a positive result;
 - The trading rules within the metric must be satisfied, and;
 - No use of the SSM on sites that contain irreplaceable, high or very high distinctiveness habitats.
- 5.1.3. There were no limitations regarding the botanical assessment to inform the BNG assessment. However, not all flowering annuals will have been observable at the time of the survey.

5.2. METRIC INPUTS AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

- 5.2.1. The habitat types on-site were input to the metric as:
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.
 - Developed land; sealed surface.
 - Modified grassland.
 - Individual trees (7x small and 2x medium).
- 5.2.2. The development will offset the loss of the trees and grassland by enacting the following measures (as shown on the habitat plan, page 7):
- Retention of 7 small trees (translocated to another location).
 - Planting of 25 small trees.
 - Enhancement of existing modified grassland to, as well as the creation of, 'other neutral grassland' to moderate condition.
 - Creation of mixed scrub to a moderate condition.

5.3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

- 5.3.1. The results show a net gain of 53.09% in area habitat (see headline result table below), satisfying all trading rules. As such, the development will adhere to the mandatory BNG obligations under the relevant legislation.



Headline		BNG Targets Met ✓	
Trading Rules		Trading Rules Satisfied ✓	
Next steps		Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric ⚠	
Baseline Units	<i>Area habitat units</i>	1.3816	
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	Zero Units Baseline	
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	Zero Units Baseline	
Post-development Units	<i>Area habitat units</i>	2.1151	
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.0000	
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.0000	
Total net unit change	<i>Area habitat units</i>	0.7335	✓
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.0000	
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.0000	
Total net % change	<i>Area habitat units</i>	53.09%	✓
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	% target not appropriate	
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	% target not appropriate	
Area habitat units required to meet target		0.0000	
Hedgerow units required to meet target		0.0000	
Watercourse units required to meet target		0.0000	

Headline results.



APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS



An overview of the development footprint.



The existing tennis court and boundary vegetation.



APPENDIX B: LEGISLATION

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal piece of UK legislation relating to the protection of wildlife. It consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain. This Directive was codified and replaced by Directive 2009/147/EC.

The Act makes it an offence to:

Intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (with exception of species listed in Schedule 2). Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young.

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

Uproot, trade in, or possess (for the purposes of trade) any wild plant listed in Schedule 8, and prohibits the unauthorised intentional uprooting of such plants (subject to exceptions).

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

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitat Regulations'), as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, establish the requirements for protecting sites that are internationally important for threatened habitats and species and thus the requirement for a 'Habitat Regulations Assessment' of plans or developments with potential to affect them.

The Habitat Regulations also establish the strict protection of some species (European Protected Species) and make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb certain wild animals, and to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal even if the animal is not present at the time.

The competent authority will have to adhere to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. As such, they must consider whether it is likely that an EPSM Licence from Natural England will be granted, and in so doing must address the three tests when deciding whether to grant planning permission for the proposed development. The three tests are that:

Regulation 55(2)(e) states: a licence can be granted for the purposes of *"preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment"*.

Regulation 55(9)(a) states: the appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied *"that there is no satisfactory alternative"*.

Regulation 55(9)(b) states: the appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied *"that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range."*



Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when exercising their normal functions. 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats and species in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the view of central government on how planners should balance nature conservation with development and helps ensure that government meets its biodiversity commitments with regard to the operation of the planning system.

Section 15 of the NPPF sets out key policy requirements regarding ecology and development.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF: "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... ..minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures".

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The legislation affording protection to badgers is primarily concerned with animal welfare and the need to protect badgers from activities such as baiting and deliberate harm. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to:

Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so;

To intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett (this includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it).

As with The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), there are several defences to prosecution in the legislation and the text should be consulted for details of these. Penalties for offences include fines up to £5,000, plus up to six months imprisonment for each illegal sett interference, or badger death or injury.

Hedgerows Regulations 1997

Important' hedgerows (as defined by the Regulations) are protected from removal (up-rooting or otherwise destroying). Criteria specified in the regulations are employed to identify 'important' hedgerows for wildlife, landscape or historical reasons.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 06/2005

Paragraph 99 of the ODPM 06/2005 states that "it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision".

Biodiversity Net Gain Legislation Summary

The Environment Act 2021 introduced mandatory BNG requirements in England, amending the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Schedule 7A). Implementation began February 12, 2024, with some exceptions for smaller developments.

Key Requirements:

Most new developments requiring planning permission must achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of at least 10%.

This is assessed using a standardized metric that assigns values to different habitat types.



Developers must demonstrate how they will achieve BNG through habitat creation, enhancement, or compensation measures.

BNG plans must consider a minimum 30-year management period to ensure biodiversity gains are sustained.

A BNG assessment involves making a comparison between the biodiversity value of habitats present within the site prior to development (the 'baseline') and the predicted biodiversity value of habitats following the completion of the development (i.e., 'post-development'). The comparison is made in terms of 'biodiversity units', with a 'biodiversity metric' providing the mechanism to allow biodiversity values to be calculated and compared.

The metric calculates the overall loss or gains of biodiversity for development projects by assessing the distinctiveness (type of habitat and its value), condition, extent, and strategic significance of habitats on site pre- and post-development. To achieve biodiversity net gain, the biodiversity unit score must have a post-development score higher than the baseline score. When calculating the post-development biodiversity units, the metric includes a series of standard 'risk multipliers' to account for the inherent risk of creating and restoring habitats, the time taken to establish habitats and the location of the mitigation in relation to the habitats lost on site. The risk multipliers have the effect of reducing the value of the proposed habitats, which means larger areas, habitats of higher distinctiveness, and/or condition are required to achieve net gain.

The metric assesses and generates separate outputs for area-based habitats (measured in habitat units) and linear based habitats, including hedgerows (measured in hedgerow units) and rivers (measured in river units). For the purpose of the BNG assessment, the output with the lowest value is used to determine whether following development there has been a net gain in biodiversity.

Distinctiveness

Each habitat is assigned a score for distinctiveness. Distinctiveness includes parameters such as species richness, diversity, rarity (at local, regional, national, and international scales) and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats (Trewick et al., 2010). The categories for distinctiveness within the metric are shown within the Natural England guidance.

Condition

The condition of each habitat is assessed using the methods set out in the Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement. This approach determines how many of the condition criteria descriptions for each habitat type are met or are not met. This is used as a guide but may be superseded where appropriate by other evidence and best ecological judgement. Where this is the case, additional information is provided in the tables used to the condition assessment. Conditions and associated scores in the Natural England. Certain habitats are allocated a fixed condition score and do not need their condition to be assessed. Some Low distinctiveness habitats are assigned 'No assessment required – condition fixed at 'Poor' and all Very Low distinctiveness habitats are assigned 'No assessment required – condition N/A'.

Strategic Significance

The metric requires that the strategic significance of all baseline and post-development habitats be defined. Strategic significance refers to areas of local priority for biodiversity and nature improvement, identified within local planning policies. As part of this assessment, the relevant local planning policy documents were reviewed to determine the strategic significance of the habitats on site.