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Report for: Mr. James Smith



**Biodiversity Gain Plan and
Ecological Enhancement
and Management Strategy**
Land to the South of Palmers
Cottage, Coneyhurst.

Executive Summary

This document has been prepared to discharge all ecology-related requirements attached to planning permission DC/25/1605 for the creation of a new farm track.

It consolidates the following into one comprehensive submission:

- Statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan (Schedule 7A, TCPA 1990)
- Condition 3 – Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy
- Condition 5 – Compliance with the approved Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)
- 30-Year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)
- Construction ecology and precautionary working measures

The development delivers:

- Baseline value: 0.44 Habitat Units (HU)
- Post-development value: 0.57 HU
- Net gain: 0.13 HU (30.58%)

The scheme exceeds the statutory 10% requirement and secures biodiversity enhancements for a minimum of 30 years.

Contents

Introduction	4
Background and Purpose	4
Approved Baseline Position.....	6
Baseline Habitat Units	6
Biodiversity Gain Plan (Statutory Submission).....	7
Biodiversity Net Gain Requirement	7
Habitat Creation and Enhancement	7
Securing Biodiversity Net Gain.....	8
Timescales.....	9
Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (Condition 3).....	10
Purpose and Conservation Objectives	10
Enhancement Design	10
Mixed Native Scrub Creation (0.063 ha)	10
Location of Enhancements	10
Implementation Responsibility	10
Aftercare and Long-Term Maintenance.....	11
Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (30 Years)	11
Management Objectives	11
Monitoring Framework.....	11
Adaptive Management.....	11
Construction Ecology Measures (Condition 5 Compliance).....	12
Pre-Commencement Check	12
Nesting Birds	12
Precautionary Method Statement	12
Ecological Supervision	12
Summary	13

Introduction

Background and Purpose

This document has been prepared to discharge the ecology-related requirements of planning permission DC/25/1605 for the creation of a new farm track at Land South of Palmers Cottage, West Chilmington Lane, Coneyhurst.

This document fulfils the following requirements:

- The statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021).
- Condition 3 – Submission of a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy.
- Condition 5 – Implementation of mitigation and enhancement measures in accordance with the approved Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA).

This document consolidates the Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP), Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (BES), Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), and Construction Ecology Measures into a single submission for clarity and efficiency.

Legislative content

This document has been prepared in accordance with:

- Environment Act 2021
- Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (Statutory Metric)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
- Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Site and Baseline Position

Site Description

The site is a rural location within the Horsham District, surrounded by a mix of agricultural land, hedgerows, and scattered residential properties. The immediate area is characterised by a patchwork of open fields, mature boundary vegetation, and a network of access tracks and minor roads typical of the local landscape. The redline boundary is within an area of grassland only and does not include any buildings associated with the adjacent landholdings.

The proposed access track will cross grassland habitat, creating a linear development feature approximately 210m in length, serving the farmstead to the north.

The approximate red line boundary of the site and the immediate surrounding area are shown in Figure 1.

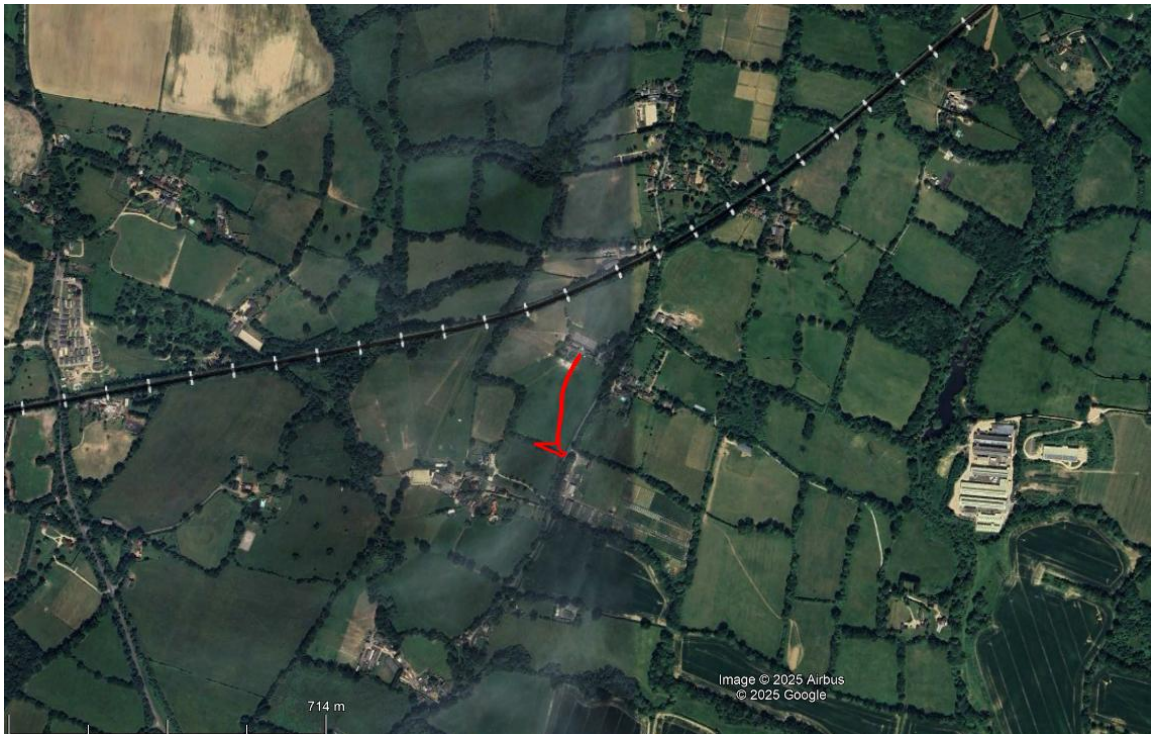


Figure 1 Approximate location of the red line boundary and immediate surroundings, based on Google Earth Pro imagery dated 14 June 2025 (image captured September 2025).

The baseline UKHab map is provided in Figure 2.

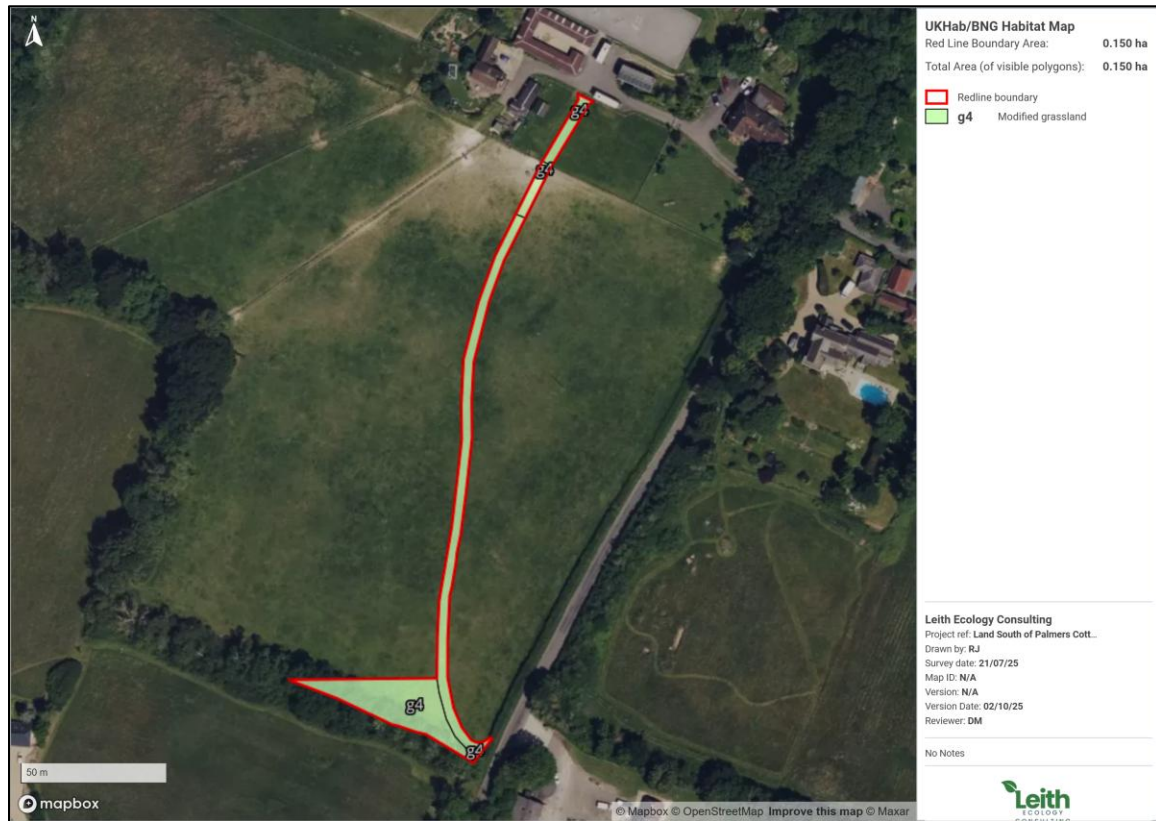


Figure 2 UKHab baseline map of habitats within the redline boundary.

Approved Baseline Position

The ecological baseline was established within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline Report (Leith Ecology Consulting, September 2025), approved under the planning permission.

Baseline Habitat Units

- Baseline habitat value: 0.44 Habitat Units (HU)
- Habitat type: Modified grassland (low distinctiveness)
- Total red line area assessed: 0.149 ha

No hedgerow units or watercourse units are applicable as none fall within the red line boundary.

Table 1 Baseline Metric Summary Extract

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Habitat Units
Urban	Bare ground	0.010	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy	0.02
Urban	Bare ground	0.007	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy	0.01
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.063	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy	0.13
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.069	Low	Moderate	Area/compensation not in local strategy	0.28
Total		0.149				0.44

Biodiversity Gain Plan (Statutory Submission)

Biodiversity Net Gain Requirement

In accordance with the Environment Act 2021, development must achieve a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity.

- Required post-development units: 0.48 HU
- Proposed post-development units: 0.57 HU
- Net gain delivered: 0.13 HU (30.58%)

The scheme therefore significantly exceeds the statutory 10% requirement.

Trading rules are satisfied and no off-site units are required.

Habitat Creation and Enhancement

To compensate for the loss of modified grassland associated with the access track, approximately 0.063 ha of modified grassland adjacent to the access gate will be enhanced to native mixed scrub.

This enhancement increases habitat distinctiveness and ecological functionality, delivering measurable biodiversity gain.

Post-Development Habitat Plan

The scheme introduces enhancement of 0.063 ha of modified grassland to native mixed scrub.

Figure 3 shows the location of the proposed native mixed scrub planting.



Produced on Land App, Oct 6, 2025.
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10 m
Scale 1:500 (at A2)
N

Figure 3 Location of native mixed scrub planting.

The post-development habitat parcels correspond exactly to those shown on Figure 3 and to the parcel references within the submitted Statutory Metric spreadsheet.

Securing Biodiversity Net Gain

The biodiversity enhancements and management obligations will be secured for a minimum of 30 years via planning condition associated with DC/25/1605.

The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan contained within this document provides the required long-term management framework.

Timescales

Habitat creation: First planting season following commencement of development.

Management commencement: Immediately following planting.

Monitoring period: Minimum 30 years.

Statutory Biodiversity Metric Confirmation

The Biodiversity Net Gain calculation has been undertaken using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (version 4.0, DEFRA 2024). The baseline survey was undertaken in July 2025 and reflects the habitats present at the time of application submission.

The completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric spreadsheet (dated 26th September 2025) was submitted in support of the application.

No irreplaceable habitats are present within the red line boundary.

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (Condition 3)

This section addresses the specific requirements of Condition 3.

Purpose and Conservation Objectives

The objectives of the enhancement measures are:

- Increase habitat distinctiveness from low to medium.
- Provide nesting, shelter and foraging habitat for farmland birds.
- Improve structural diversity for invertebrates and small mammals.
- Enhance ecological connectivity with adjacent hedgerows.

Enhancement Design

Mixed Native Scrub Creation (0.063 ha)

Planting will include a minimum of seven native woody shrub species, such as:

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)

Planting density: Approximately 1 plant per 1.5m² (or equivalent mix of whips and transplants).
Approximate 400-450 whips will be planted to cover the area of habitat.

Protection: Tree guards where required.

Ground preparation: Suppression of dominant grasses prior to planting.

All planting stock shall be of UK native provenance and sourced from within Seed Zone 301 (South East England). Whips shall be 60–90cm bare root stock unless otherwise agreed.

Location of Enhancements

Enhancements are located adjacent to the existing access gate within the western portion of the red line boundary. Refer to the approved habitat plan for spatial reference.

Implementation Responsibility

Implementation and oversight will be undertaken by:

- A suitably qualified ecologist (Ecological Clerk of Works if required).
- The landowner or appointed contractor for planting and maintenance.

Aftercare and Long-Term Maintenance

The proposed 30-year management and monitoring plan is provided in Appendix 1.

Initial aftercare (Years 1–3):

- Replacement of failed plants annually.
- Control of competitive grasses and injurious weeds.
- Maintenance of protective guards.

Long-term maintenance (Years 4–30):

- Rotational scrub management to maintain structural diversity.
- Removal of invasive non-native species if detected.
- Maintenance of habitat mosaic.

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (30 Years)

The proposed 30-year management and monitoring plan is provided in Appendix 1.

Management Objectives

- Achieve and maintain mixed scrub in good condition.
- Ensure $\geq 80\%$ shrub survival at Year 3.
- Maintain $< 10\%$ invasive or injurious weed cover.
- Maintain varied age structure across scrub area.

Monitoring Framework

Monitoring frequency:

- Annual monitoring Years 1–5.
- Monitoring every 5 years thereafter to Year 30.

Monitoring will include:

- Fixed-point photography.
- Botanical condition checks.
- Assessment against condition criteria.

Monitoring reports will be retained and provided to the Local Planning Authority upon request.

Adaptive Management

If monitoring identifies:

- Shrub survival below 80%
- Excessive invasive species presence
- Failure to achieve condition targets

Remedial actions will include replanting, additional weed control, adjusted cutting regimes, or other ecologist-recommended measures.

Construction Ecology Measures (Condition 5 Compliance)

All mitigation measures contained within the approved PEA will be adhered to. The Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected and Priority species set out within the approved Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (September 2025) shall be implemented in full.

Pre-Commencement Check

Prior to works commencing, a suitably qualified ecologist will undertake a site inspection to confirm no material ecological changes have occurred.

Nesting Birds

If vegetation clearance occurs between March and August inclusive, a nesting bird check will be undertaken within 48 hours of works.

If active nests are identified, works will cease in the affected area until fledging has occurred.

Precautionary Method Statement

- Vegetation clearance to proceed progressively.
- Any excavations left overnight to include escape ramps.
- No lighting spill onto adjacent habitat boundaries.

Ecological Supervision

An Ecological Clerk of Works will be appointed if required (e.g., during groundworks/vegetation clearance and during habitat creation) to oversee habitat works and advise on any unexpected ecological constraints.

Summary

This document:

- Demonstrates delivery of 30.58% Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Provides the required Biodiversity Gain Plan.
- Satisfies Condition 3 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy).
- Confirms compliance with Condition 5 (PEA implementation).
- Secures habitat management for a minimum of 30 years.

The development can therefore lawfully proceed subject to approval of this document by Horsham District Council.

Appendix 1. 30-Year Management and Monitoring Schedule

The table below provides the detailed management and monitoring schedule to support delivery of the target habitat condition and 30-year BNG obligations. Monitoring reports shall be submitted to the LPA at Years 1, 3 and 5 and every 5 years thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Year(s)	Management activity	Timing / frequency	Responsibility	Records / evidence	Success criteria / trigger
Pre-works	Pre-commencement ecological check; confirm working areas; confirm no new constraints	Within 3 months prior to start (repeat if delay >3 months)	Suitably qualified ecologist	Ecological check note; photos	No new constraints identified; baseline still representative
0 (installation)	Ground preparation; mixed native scrub planting; install guards; mulch if used	First planting season post-start (Nov–Mar)	Contractor under ecologist oversight; landowner	As-built plan; planting schedule; delivery notes	Extent and density achieved
Years 1–3	Weed control around whips; replace failures; maintain guards; water only if prolonged drought	2 visits per growing season; replacement in winter	Landowner/contractor; ecologist to advise	Maintenance log; replacement counts	≥80% survival by end of Year 3; <10% injurious/invasive cover
Years 1–5	Monitoring: photo points; survival counts; habitat condition check	Annual (Aug–Sep)	Ecologist	Monitoring report; fixed-point photos	Positive trajectory toward target condition; trigger if survival <80% or invasive >10%
Years 4–10	Formative pruning/light thinning; edge control; maintain access/sightlines	Every 2–3 years, as required	Landowner/contractor	Work log; photographs	Maintain structural diversity; safe access retained
Years 10–30	Rotational coppice/thin to create mixed age structure; retain deadwood where safe; ongoing invasive control	Coppice blocks on 10–15 year cycle; invasive checks annually	Landowner/contractor; ecologist periodic review	Work log; photographs	Mixed age structure present; invasive cover <10%
Years 6–30	Monitoring and reporting	Every 5 years (or more often if triggered)	Ecologist	Monitoring report; photos; actions list	Condition maintained; adaptive action implemented within 6 months of trigger
Any time	Unexpected finds protocol (protected species)	Immediate	All site personnel; ecologist	Incident record; ecologist advice note	Works paused until mitigation agreed