
Biodiversity Enhancement Layout

Heron's Holt, Hurston Lane, Storrington

(ref: ESEC/25057/04/v0.1)

Introduction

Essential Ecology (ESEC) has been commissioned by Fairwater Limited to provide a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout to inform a planning application for the site, located at Heron's Holt, Hurston Lane, Storrington (central ordnance survey (OS) grid reference TQ 0781 1556).

The site was granted planning permission in December 2025 (ref: DC/25/1464) and is subject to a number of conditions. Of these, condition 4 states:

"Within 3 months of the date of the permission hereby granted, a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for biodiversity enhancements listed in the Ecological Appraisal (Essential Ecology, September 2025) shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Layout shall include the following:

- a) detailed designs or product descriptions for biodiversity enhancements; and*
- b) locations, orientations and heights for biodiversity enhancements on appropriate drawings*

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended)."

The purpose of this technical note is to set out detailed measures in relation to proposed biodiversity at the site in order to inform the discharge of condition 4.

Site Location and Overview

The site is located adjacent to the east of Hurston Lane, to the north of Storrington, within Horsham District. Within a wider context, the site is surrounded primarily by agricultural land, woodland and residential development.

The site itself comprises an area of c. 0.27ha. The site is dominated by modified grassland, along with developed land; sealed surface, tall forbs, mixed scrub, Bramble scrub, an individual tree and an ecologically valuable line of trees associated with a bank.

Biodiversity Enhancements - Habitats

Habitats enhancement and management measures are described below, with locations shown on drawing ESEC/25057/04-01.

Other Neutral Grassland

Areas of modified grassland in the south-east of the site will be enhanced to other neutral grassland. This will be achieved by stripping the existing grassland (as part of ground levelling works) and sowing a wildflower grass mix.

Prior to sowing, the area will be cultivated to produce a firm, weed-free seed bed with a fine tilth. An appropriate mix of native wildflower and grass seed will be broadcast across the area. This will comprise Emorsgate EM2 'Standard General-Purpose Meadow Mixture', with Emorsgate EP1 'Pond Edge Mixture' sown at the pond margins. The seed mix will be sown according to manufacturer's specifications (4g/m²). Sowing will, where practicable, be undertaken in autumn (September – early November), but depending on the development schedule and weather conditions, spring sowing (late February to mid-April) may be required. Sowing can, if necessary, be undertaken outside these periods, e.g. in the late spring or summer months, in which case frequent watering is likely to be required throughout the first summer and potentially into autumn. Sowing will be undertaken by broadcasting the seed mixture bulked out with sand or similar inert material, to facilitate an even distribution of seed. Spring-sown seed will be lightly rolled, using a Cambridge roller, or by treading, to ensure good contact between seed and the soil.

Following sowing, if the developing plants are providing a high level of cover, cutting will not be undertaken before July. During July, a 'hay' cut will be made to approximately 50mm height, with the cuttings removed to a suitable compost facility. However, if there are substantial gaps between individual plants during the first year, regular cuts may be taken to encourage plants to tiller and infill gaps. In this case, cuts will be taken when the sward height exceeds 100mm, cutting down to 50mm. Any dense cuttings will be removed from the sward.

In the second year, the grassland will be cut to approximately 50mm in early March, after which the sward will be left uncut until July, with cuttings then removed. A further late season cut will be taken in late August to October, again with the cuttings removed.

Ongoing management in years three onwards will involve a single cut per year in late summer to encourage flowering and seeding. Management of grassland around the margins of scrub and woodland will be of a lower intensity, to encourage a soft transition between grassland and woody habitats. This will comprise rotational cutting once every two to three years.

No fertilisers or herbicides will be applied to the grassland, except to specifically spot treat unwanted ruderal or pernicious weed species within the sward.

Other Woodland; Broadleaved

Two areas of broadleaved woodland will be planted in the south-east of the site. Woodland will be planted with native tree and shrub species known to occur in the local area. A diversity of native species will be planted to ensure at least five species per 10m radius. Species will include Oak, Ash, Birch, Wild Cherry, Elm, Willow, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dogwood, Hazel, Holly, Spindle, Honeysuckle, Wayfaring Tree and/or Wild Privet. A minimum of 10 species will be included.

The planting season will be from October to March inclusive. Container grown stock may be planted outside this season if followed by regular watering (daily if necessary) to ensure establishment. Planting will not be carried out during periods of frost, drought, cold, drying winds, or when the soil is waterlogged or frozen. All specimens will be planted upright and at the same depth as the nursery soil level. Immediately after planting, trees will be watered to field capacity. Container grown and root-balled plants will be planted in a pit sufficient to accommodate the plant without causing root damage, with a minimum of 50mm backfill beyond the rootball extent. Plants will be firmed and watered-in. Any dead, damaged or lopsided branches will be removed after planting. Bare-root plants will be slit-planted. The trees will be staked and mulched to a minimum depth of 75mm up to 750mm from the trunk.

New planting will be subject to weed control to promote growth through the application of mulch or mulch mats around the base. Tree guards or shelters will be used to protect new plantings from potential grazing damage (e.g. Rabbits). Weed control and watering will be undertaken during the initial management phase to ensure rapid establishment.

New planting will generally only be subject to management on an 'as needed' basis. This may include thinning out or pruning of specimens to enhance habitat structure or reduce shading or removal of colonising non-native species. Newly planted areas in particular will not be subject to any substantial management in the short-term to allow them to establish. Once established, tree shelters will be removed and stakes provided if required.

The developing woodland will be monitored for colonisation by invasive species, such as Rhododendron and Cherry Laurel. Any such species will be controlled as necessary, including spot application of herbicides where required.

Pond

A new pond will be created towards the south-east of the site. The pond will be designed to deliver wildlife benefits, including a range of depths and wide, undulating drawdown zones. Shallow areas will be created by creating shallow banks with a slope of less than 1:5 (12°) and ideally less than 1:20 (3°). It will be planted with a range of marginal vegetation (see measures for other neutral grassland above), comprising a high proportion of native species. Aquatic plants will be allowed to colonise naturally.

During the early years following pond creation, whilst the vegetation is establishing, the possibility of colonisation by invasive/alien plant species is high. As such, monitoring will include checking for

presence of invasive exotic species. If found to be present, early intervention / removal of such species will help to control their spread, which if left unmanaged may outcompete native flora. The presence of Duckweed and filamentous algae will similarly be monitored and controlled as required.

Similarly, naturally colonising vegetation around the pond margins could include scrub species such as Willow which favour damp ground. Whilst these would likely provide some valuable cover, such species significantly shade pond habitats to the detriment of their wildlife value. As such, any scrub colonisation will be closely monitored and controlled where necessary to ensure that the pond surface is no more than 50% shaded.

Introduction of fish into the pond will be avoided, while unauthorised introduction by the public is highly unlikely given the lack of public access.

Native Hedgerow

A new native hedgerow is proposed along the south-eastern boundary of the site. The hedgerow will target a height and width of at least 1.5m.

The new hedgerow will comprise native species known to be present in the local area, comprising at least five different tree and shrub species. Suitable species include Elm, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dogwood, Hazel, Holly, Spindle, Honeysuckle and/or Wild Privet. The hedgerow will be established using bare-rooted whips, 45cm-60cm tall, planted at a rate of 5 plants per metre, in a staggered double row with approximately 40cm between rows. Whips will be planted during winter period (October to March), avoiding periods when the soil is waterlogged or frozen. Specimens will be planted into bare ground created by cultivation, herbicide use or turf stripping. If using herbicide to create bare ground, this will need to be applied in the preceding late summer/early autumn.

The new hedgerow will be mulched as described above for woodland creation. The hedgerow will be trimmed annually in late winter, cutting back 30-50% of new growth annually, until reaching the target height and width (at least 1.5m). Once these dimensions are achieved, an annual or alternate-year cutting regime will maintain the target height, ideally on a rotational basis leaving at least 1/3 of the hedgerow uncut each year.

In the long-term, consideration will be given to hedgerow laying to maximise the longevity of the hedgerow, depending on resources.

Mixed Scrub (retained and enhanced)

The small area of mixed scrub along the north-eastern boundary of the site will be enhanced by increasing the number of native woody species and encouraging a well-developed edge. This will be achieved by supplementary planting of native shrub species around the margin of the scrub, following the process described above for woodland.

A well-developed edge will be provided through low intensity grassland management around the margin of the scrub (as described above). The scrub will be cut back around the margins every 3-4

years to maintain a well-developed edge with the grassland and provide a range of heights within the scrub.

Other Retained Habitats

Some areas of existing modified grassland will be retained under the proposals. Prior to development, this habitat was intensively grazed by horses. As such, post development management will comprise regular mowing of the grassland to prevent encroachment by scrub and tall ruderal vegetation. Given the low value of this existing habitat, it is considered appropriate to allow the precise mowing frequency and timing to be flexible, provided that the grassland is cut at least twice per year.

Other retained habitats comprise the line of trees along the western boundary of the site, Bramble scrub, tall forbs, and a rural tree. These habitats largely lie outside of the existing fence line that demarks the grassland field, and are thus not subject to any routine management under the baseline situation. These habitats are not proposed for enhancement and do not require any specific management to maintain their condition. Nevertheless, management will be undertaken as required, to include trimming to prevent encroachment into other habitats and tree pruning to maintain the health of trees and minimise safety risk from falling branches.

Biodiversity Enhancements – Fauna

Faunal enhancement measures are shown on drawing ESEC/25057/04-01 and described below.

Bats

A total of four bat boxes, in the form of Vivara Pro Large Multichamber WoodStone Bat Boxes, will be provided as part of the proposals. Consideration has been given to the inclusion of bat boxes on buildings. However, this has been deemed unsuitable due to building heights, material and presence of lighting in the vicinity/on the buildings. As such, boxes will be located on existing trees within tree line TL1 (see drawing ESEC/25057/04-01).

Boxes will be installed in pairs on the south-eastern and south-western face of the identified tree at heights of 4-5m.

Birds

A total of four bird boxes will be provided as part of the proposals. Two boxes will be cited on trees and two boxes cited on buildings.

Two boxes, in the form of Vivara Pro Seville 28mm WoodStone Nest Boxes, will be located on existing trees within tree line TL1 (see drawing ESEC/25057/04-01). Boxes will be located on the eastern or northern tree face at heights of 4-5m.

Two boxes, in the form of Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Boxes, will be located on buildings (see drawing ESEC/25057/04-01). Boxes will be located at the apex of the eastern gable ends at heights of c. 2.6-2.8m.

Monitoring

Routine monitoring will be undertaken by the site owner or their appointed contractor. Monitoring will be undertaken for the first three years after planting, then in years 5, 10 and 15.

Monitoring and remedial measures during establishment will include:

- Control of weed species within the grassland, including Thistles, Docks and Nettles.
- The health of planted trees and shrubs, including any browsing damage with tree protection measures implemented as required.
- Control and removal of Cherry Laurel or Rhododendron within the planted woodland.
- Control of Duckweed and filamentous algae within the pond by hand-removal with a net or rake.
- Removal of self-set trees at the pond edge to ensure shading remains below 50%.
- Control and removal of any invasive alien species within the site in consultation with a specialist contractor.
- Replacement of failed stock/seed.
- Checking of bat and bird boxes to ensure boxes remain present and functional. Should any boxes be damaged/lost, these will be replaced/repaired.

Conclusions

The proposals bring forward a range of biodiversity enhancements which will provide a betterment for biodiversity at the site in the long-term. This note sets out details of proposed enhancements to maximise benefits and inform the discharge of condition 4 of planning permission.



Key:

Habitats

- Site Boundary
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Buildings
- Other structures
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Mixed scrub
- Bramble scrub
- Tall forbs
- Other woodland; broadleaved
- Ponds (non-priority habitat)
- Individual tree
- Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch
- Native hedgerow

Fauna

- 1x Vivara Pro Seville 28mm WoodStone® Nest Box
- 1x Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box
- 2x Vivara Pro Large Multi Chamber WoodStone Bat Box

Project:
Heron's Holt, Hurston Lane, Storrington

Drawing Title:
Biodiversity Enhancement Layout

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