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Church Farm, Upper Beeding – LWS Compensation Statement

Purpose

This statement identifies the habitats to be created at Church Farm as direct compensation for land taken from the Local Wildlife Site (LWS). It was prepared at the request of Horsham District Council's ecologist and is separate from the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment (Biodiversity Impact Calculation Report, Rev06; Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Rev08).

The development footprint lies within the LWS and the habitat lost is 0.493 ha of recently cleared bramble scrub (h3d). None of the habitats for which the LWS is designated, such as wetland and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, will be lost.

Policy 31(4) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) requires appropriate mitigation and compensation where development affects a locally designated site. In line with the Council's guidance, this compensation is identified separately from, and in addition to, the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain.

LWS compensation habitats

The following habitat, created within the LWS, is the direct compensation for the LWS land take. As agreed with the Council's ecologist, this habitat is identified as LWS compensation rather than as part of the net gain and focusses upon grassland interest, as bramble scrub habitat is not a feature of the LWS.

Habitat	Metric ref.	Area	Target condition	Habitat units
Other neutral grassland (g3c), two wildflower grassland parcels	G3–G4	0.057 ha	Poor	0.21

The compensation is smaller in area than the land take, with much of the habitat creation focusing on the benefits from creating mixed scrub habitat both to satisfy habitat trading rules and to provide a benefit for breeding birds, whilst it is not possible to create habitats aligned with the designating features of the LWS, given the topography of this location. The habitat lost is low-value scrub rather than any of the habitats the LWS is designated for, so the compensation does not seek to recreate them.

Effect on biodiversity net gain

With the LWS compensation grassland taken out of the BNG calculation, the scheme still delivers a net gain of +67.25% in habitat units, well above the 10% requirement.

To show this, the units delivered by the compensation grassland have been removed from the post-intervention total in the below illustration. The on-site baseline (2.04 habitat units) is unchanged, and the percentage is calculated against it, as in the metric.

Scenario	Net change (habitat units)	Net gain (%)
As submitted, all habitats counted	+1.58	+77.67%
LWS compensation grassland excluded	+1.37	+67.25%

Hedgerow units are unaffected: the scheme delivers +0.68 hedgerow units from a zero baseline. The trading rules remain satisfied, because the compensation grassland was not needed to meet them. The net gain comes mainly from enhancing 0.696 ha of bramble scrub to mixed scrub, and from 0.124 ha of new broadleaved woodland, within the blue line.

Securing and delivery

The compensation grassland will be created, managed and monitored under the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for the site. Its delivery will be secured through the legal agreement for BNG. It lies outside the private gardens, and the HMMP will identify it by the references above as LWS compensation.

We understand this statement will be submitted under a pre-commencement condition, as proposed by the Council's ecologist.