
Caversham, Reading

786-B073665

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Planning Issues Ltd

January 2026

**Document prepared on behalf of Tetra Tech Limited. Registered in England number:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contents	Summary
Site Location	The site is located south and west of Knighton Close, Reading, RG4 7SZ (Figure 1) and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 71240 75205. The site lies in Caversham, near the centre of the city of Reading. The site consists of a primary school and nursery and includes grassland, buildings, hardstanding, ornamental planting and woodland. The site lies within an urban location, bounded by existing residential development in all directions. The nearest green spaces are Balmore Walk located approximately 75m to the east and Caversham Cemetery (Victoria Road), a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), approximately 200m to the north. The site also lies approximately 600m to the north of the River Thames.
Proposals	The proposal comprises the redevelopment of the site for retirement apartments with associated infrastructure, parking and open space. The proposed site plan (PLAN24092 10A) illustrates the redline boundary used to inform this assessment.
Scope of this Survey(s)	The aim of this BNG assessment is to: • Quantify the pre-development baseline habitat/hedgerow units; • Quantify the post-development habitat/hedgerow units on site; and • Calculate the likely change in biodiversity units for habitat units from pre- to post-development to provide an indication of the biodiversity losses / gains that may occur should the proposed development proceed. The assessment has been made using DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024a) in conjunction with the User guide (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024b)
Results and Evaluation	The baseline habitat unit value pre-development is 3.97 and post-development will result in 4.65 habitat units. Creating a 17.29 % total net change and meeting the required 10 %. The baseline hedgerow unit value pre-development is 0.00 and post-development will result in 0.22 hedgerow units. The trading rules for habitats and hedgerows are met.
Recommendations	The site currently meets 10% net gain for habitat units and meets the trading rules, therefore meeting the requirements of current local and national planning policy. To secure these biodiversity net gains for at least 30 years as per the Environment Act 2021, it should be conditioned that a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is produced to detail the habitat management required to meet the habitat conditions detailed in this report for a period of 30 years.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tetra Tech was commissioned by Planning Issues Ltd on 8th May 2025 to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of Caversham, Reading, hereafter referred to as “the site”.

This report has been prepared by Consultant Ecologist Georgie Atkinson BSc and the conditions pertinent to it are included within Appendix A.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located south and west of Knighton Close, Reading, RG4 7SZ (Figure 1) and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 71240 75205. The site lies in Caversham, near the centre of the city of Reading. The site consists of a primary school and nursery and includes grassland, buildings, hardstanding, ornamental planting and woodland. The site lies within an urban location, bounded by existing residential development in all directions. The nearest green spaces are Balmore Walk located approximately 75m to the east and Caversham Cemetery (Victoria Road), a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), approximately 200m to the north. The site also lies approximately 600m to the north of the River Thames.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The proposal comprises the redevelopment of the site for retirement apartments with associated infrastructure, parking and open space. The proposed site plan (Appendix B, Drawing No. PLAN24092 10A) illustrates the redline boundary used to inform this assessment.

1.4 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- Quantify the pre-development baseline of habitat and hedgerow, biodiversity and linear units present on site;
- Quantify the post-development habitat and hedgerow, biodiversity and linear units on site which will be retained, reinstated or created under the proposed landscape mitigation plan; and
- Calculate the likely change in biodiversity units from pre- to post-development to determine whether the proposed development will result in either net loss, no net loss or a net gain for biodiversity, with a focus on Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI).

The details of this report will remain valid for a period of eighteen months from the date of the survey (December 2026), after which the validity of this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether further updates are necessary. The recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the red line boundary or development proposals which this report was based on.

Scientific names are provided at the first mention of each species and common names (where appropriate) are then used throughout the rest of the report for ease of reading.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 BIODIVERSITY OFFSETTING GUIDANCE

The assessment has been made using DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024a) in conjunction with the User Guide (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024b) and Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development (Baker, Hoskin, & Butterworth, 2019). This comprises the following steps, described in Section 2.2, with detailed methodology provided in Appendix D.

2.2 HABITAT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1 Habitats

Pre-development

An extended UKHab habitat survey and condition assessment was undertaken on the site on 24th July 2025 by Principal Ecologist Alex Coggins BSc (Hons). The weather conditions were cloudy, dry, calm and consisted of a temperature of 18°C.

The pre-development habitats present on site were mapped in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Professional Edition V2 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). The pre-development habitats are shown in Figure 2.

The habitats were converted into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024a) from the UKHab classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023). Further detail of habitat descriptions with target notes can be found in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken for this project (Tetra Tech, 2026).

Post-development

Each of the post-development habitats, as set out on the Post Development Plan (Figure 3) and Site Layout Plan (Appendix B, Drawing No. PLAN24092 10A), were assigned a UKHab category which was considered to best represent the habitat present post-development, this was then converted to a BNG Metric category. See Figure 3 for the post-development habitats.

2.2.2 Habitat 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 (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024b).

2.2.3 Habitat Condition

The condition of each habitat is assessed using the methods set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric - The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology November 2023 (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024c).

The baseline condition assessment data can be found in Appendix C.

2.2.4 Strategic Significance

The strategic significance of a site within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric is based upon several factors such as but not limited to:

- If the site is identified within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) area; and
- If an LNRS has not yet been published, if the site is identified within a local planning policy as a biodiversity and nature or green infrastructure improvement areas.

A LNRS for Berkshire was published in October 2025 (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, 2026), with the associated mapping indicating areas of potential significance. The site is not within a baseline biodiversity (APIB) area or opportunities for biodiversity (ACB) area.

The relevant policy document for the site is the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (Reading Borough Council, 2019).

The data request to the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) completed as part of the Ecological Appraisal (Tetra Tech, 2026) did not identify any formally designated sites within the site boundary. The nearest designated site is located 0.27km Southwest of the site at the Local Wildlife Site (LWS), The Warren Woodlands Complex.

The desk-based study identified a total of 21 Priority Habitat parcels within a 1 km radius of the site, comprising 19 areas of deciduous woodland and four areas of good quality semi-improved grassland. A priority habitat was identified within the boundaries of the site; this was a deciduous woodland parcel located on site in the northwestern corner. Therefore, the other woodland; broadleaved habitat within the site have been assigned a strategic significance of 'Formally identified in local strategy'.

All remaining habitats are generally lower distinctiveness or more widespread and as such have been assigned a strategic significance of 'Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy' within the metric.

2.2.5 Risk Factors

As part of any proposed habitat creation and enhancement, risk factors must be considered to correct for disparity, delay or risk; these are:

- Time to target condition;
- Difficulty of restoration / creation; and
- If habitat created is undertaken in advance or delayed prior to the development.

2.3 LIMITATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations detailed in this report are based upon the site redline boundary and the development proposals as outlined by the client at the time of writing. Should there be any changes to the site redline boundary, landscape plans or development proposals at a later stage, this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether any amendments or additional survey work is required.

The best possible effort was made during the mapping process to ensure that all habitats identified on site were mapped accurately and represent the area of habitats present on site. Some margin of error is

possible due to the difficulty defining the continuous nature of habitat boundaries. However, this margin of error has been minimised as far as practically possible using the professional opinion of two experienced ecologists, desk-based information and up to date aerial imagery.

The assessment of habitats pre and post-development required conversion from UKHab habitat categories into Metric categories. This information is then inputted into the Metric in terms of the habitat areas being retained, lost or enhanced. Whilst not a significant limitation, when using the Metric calculation tool to convert the UKHab types into Metric categories, the different habitat types do not exactly align. Therefore, some habitats were included within a more general habitat category under UKHab to allow the calculation tool to be applied, this also applies to the post development landscape plan used for the site. For transparency, the conversion tables in Section 2.2.1 set out which habitats have been paired during the conversion.

Note that scores for habitats, hedgerows and rivers are reported separately and therefore should not be summed or averaged to produce a final overall biodiversity value for the site.

The outputs of the Metric are not absolute values but provide a proxy for the relative biodiversity worth of a site pre and post development. The calculations within this report should be reviewed and updated should there be any changes to the habitats on site pre-development. As the change in biodiversity units is determined by subtracting the number of pre-intervention biodiversity units (i.e. those originally existing on-site and off-site) from the number of post-intervention units (i.e. those projected to be provided), this report should be updated should the proposals for the site change.

The Metric does not override or undermine any existing planning policy or legislation, including the mitigation hierarchy, which should always be considered as the Metric is applied. Furthermore, the Metric does not change the protection afforded to biodiversity. Existing levels of protection afforded to protected species (such as for bats) and to habitats, are not changed by use of this or any other Metric.

The optimal period to undertake habitat condition assessment for botanical interest is April-September. The survey was completed on 24th July 2025 which is within the optimal survey window.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 PRE-DEVELOPMENT BASELINE UNITS

The baseline conditions assessments for habitats units are provided in more detail in Appendix C.

The habitats present on site are shown in Table 1, alongside their distinctiveness and condition categories, with the total area of the habitats onsite (1.39ha) and the associated baseline biodiversity units.

3.2 IRREPLACEABLE HABITATS

Within the baseline habitat surveys, no irreplaceable habitats have been recorded on site, therefore no bespoke mitigation for irreplaceable habitats is proposed.

Table 1: Pre-development Habitat Baseline Units

Habitat Type	Ref.	Irreplaceable Habitat (Y/N)	Area (ha)	Area Retained (ha)	Area Enhanced (ha)	Area Lost (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	1	N	0.113	0.00	0.00	0.11	V.Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	2	N	0.332	0.00	0.00	0.33	V.Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Grassland - Modified grassland	3	N	0.312	0.00	0.00	0.31	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.62
Sparsely vegetated land - Tall forbs	4	N	0.007	0.00	0.00	0.01	Low	Moderate	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.03
Urban - Introduced shrub	5	N	0.035	0.00	0.00	0.04	Low	Condition Assessment N/A	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.07
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved	6	N	0.016	0.016	0.00	0.00	Medium	Poor	Formally identified in local strategy	0.07
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed	7	N	0.058	0.058	0.00	0.00	Medium	Poor	Formally identified in local strategy	0.27
Individual trees - Urban tree	8	N	0.0041	0.0041	0.00	0.00	Medium	Poor	Formally identified in local strategy	0.02
Individual trees - Urban tree	9	N	0.1303	0.114	0.00	0.02	Medium	Poor	Formally identified in local strategy	0.60

Caversham, Reading
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Individual trees - Urban tree	10	N	0.2199	0.1833	0.00	0.04	Medium	Poor	Formally identified in local strategy	1.01
Individual trees - Urban tree	11	N	0.0651	0.0488	0.00	0.02	Medium	Moderate	Formally identified in local strategy	0.60
Individual trees - Urban tree	12	N	0.0733	0.0733	0.00	0.00	Medium	Moderate	Formally identified in local strategy	0.67
Total units:										3.97

3.3 POST DEVELOPMENT UNITS

Post development habitats as shown in site layout plan (Appendix B, Drawing No. PLAN24092 10A) have been split depending on whether they are to be retained, enhanced or created. On this basis, the onsite post-intervention value is calculated to be 4.65habitat units (an increase of 0.0.69 units or 17.29 %) and 0.22 hedgerow units (an increase of 0.22 units or N/A (zero baseline units, therefore percentage cannot be calculated)).

The habitats created as part of the development are provided in Table 2. Further details regarding retention, creation and enhancement proposals are outlined below.

Retention

In line with the current proposals the existing woodland and 19 urban trees onsite, with the grassland under canopies are to be retained.

Creation

The development will include the creation of developed land; sealed surface (roads, car park, buildings etc), 21 urban trees, vegetated gardens, modified grassland and other neutral grassland.

Enhancement

No enhancements are proposed to be made to the habitats onsite.

Table 2: Post-development Habitat units – Created

Habitat Type	Ref.	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Grassland - Other neutral grassland	1	0.082	Medium	Moderate	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.55
Urban - Vegetated garden	2	0.095	Low	Condition Assessment N/A	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.18
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	3	0.228	Very Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	4	0.182	Very Low	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Grassland - Modified grassland	5	0.213	Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.41
Individual trees - Urban tree	6	0.105	Medium	Moderate	Formally identified in local strategy	0.37
Individual trees - Urban tree	7	0.082	Medium	Moderate	Formally identified in local strategy	0.29
Total units:						1.80

Table 3: Post-development Hedgerow units – Created

Hedgerow Type	Ref.	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	1	0.223	Very Low	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.22
Total units:						0.22

3.4 HEADLINE RESULTS

The data used to inform the condition assessments for the habitats pre-development and calculations from the Statutory Biodiversity are provided in Appendix C

Headline habitat results are provided in Table 4. This shows that with the implementation of the habitats within the Post Development Habitat Plan (Figure 3), and achievement of the conditions as set out in Appendix E, the development proposals would likely result in a net gain of approximately 0.84 habitat units (+17.29%). In addition, 0.22 hedgerow units (N/A%) are to be created.

Trading rules

The trading rules set minimum habitat creation and enhancement requirements to compensate for specific habitat losses, up to the point of no net loss. They are based on the habitat type and distinctiveness of the lost habitat. As per Rule 1 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024b) “*The trading rules of this biodiversity metric must be followed*” and “*if trading rules have not been satisfied, then a net gain in biodiversity cannot be claimed*”.

The trading rules for habitats/hedgerows are met. A summary of the trading rules is provided in Table 5.

Table 4: Headline Results

Project Stage	Habitat Type	Units
On-site baseline	Habitat units	3.97
	Hedgerow units	0.00
On site post-intervention	Habitat units	4.65
	Hedgerow units	0.22
On site total net unit change	Habitat units	0.69
	Hedgerow units	0.22
Total percentage change	Habitat units	17.29%
	Hedgerow units	N/A
Trading rules met?		Yes

Table 5: Trading Rule Summary

Trading Summary		
Distinctiveness Group	Trading Rule	Trading Satisfied?
Very High	Bespoke compensation likely to be required	Yes ✓
High	Same habitat required	Yes ✓
Medium	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required	Yes ✓
Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	Yes ✓

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 SIGNIFICANT ON-SITE ENHANCEMENTS

Significant on-site enhancements are defined as areas of habitat enhancement which contribute significantly to the proposed development's biodiversity net gain relative to the biodiversity value before development. Retention of existing habitat does not count as an on-site enhancement.

Below are listed the significant on-site enhancements proposed for the site;

- Creation of 28 urban trees (medium distinctiveness); and
- Creation of other neutral grassland (medium distinctiveness)

4.2 TRADING RULES

The trading rules are met due to all habitats on site proposed to be replaced like for like or like for better distinctiveness of habitat as per Table 5, therefore no further design changes to the post development layout are required to meet the trading rules.

4.3 BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

As per the Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development (Baker, J., Hoskin, R., & Butterworth, T, 2019) and BS 8683 – “Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain”, the proposed development has been designed in accordance with the following key principles:

Principle 1: Apply the mitigation hierarchy

Avoidance:

The loss of more valuable habitat onsite has been avoided where possible, the implementation of proposed Root Protection Areas (RPAs) urban trees (medium distinctiveness habitat), ensures that the proposed retained individual trees – Urban tree and surrounding areas of 19 are protected during the construction phase of the development.

Minimise:

Habitats proposed to be lost are limited to three individual tree - Urban trees (Medium distinctiveness) being removed thus the development proposals will allow retention of 19 from 28 in pre-development.

Compensation:

Habitats are proposed to be compensated for by the creation of habitats of

Principle 2: Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere

Irreplaceable habitats are not present on site and are not to be indirectly impacted by the proposed development, therefore this principle does not apply.

Principle 3: Be inclusive and equitable

As part of this biodiversity net gain assessment, the design team have been engaged early within the design process to try to achieve a net gain.

Principle 4: Address risk

As part of this biodiversity net gain assessment, the design team have been engaged to address potential risks at a early stage, primarily around the retention of the highest quality habitats (e.g., woodland) on site and the design of proposed created habitats however with current proposals this was able to be achieved.

Principle 5: Make a measurable net gain contribution

The site has achieved a measurable net gain for biodiversity, achieving a proposed 17.29% net gain in habitat units.

Principle 6: Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity

The site has achieved the best outcome for biodiversity through creating a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) habitat on site to support local/national targets for biodiversity.

Principle 7: Be additional

The site has achieved additionality through the creation of urban trees and non-native ornamental hedgerow. In addition, wildflower planting is proposed on site as part of current plans.

Principle 8: Create a net gain legacy

The site will achieve a net gain legacy through the production of a habitat management plan that details the management required to meet the conditions of the habitats as detailed within this biodiversity net gain assessment. The habitat management plan will be secured by a planning condition relating to the proposed development.

Principle 9: Optimise sustainability

The site has aimed to optimise sustainability through providing EV charging points and solar panels on the roof of the lodge. In addition permeable paving will help sustainable drainage.

Principle 10: Be transparent

The biodiversity net gain assessment outlines all methodology used to achieve a net gain for this proposed development, including baseline data, how this was recorded and how biodiversity net gain has been designed into the scheme.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The current proposals achieve a net gain of 17.29% for habitat units, and 0% for hedgerow units. As the biodiversity net gain assessment shows that the current post development layout will achieve a net gain in habitats and hedgerows units and trading rules are met, it is considered that this meets the current NPPF policy relating to biodiversity net gain and meets 10% net gain in biodiversity units as per the Environment Act 2021, as set out in Appendix B.

The biodiversity net gain assessment is considered to meet the current local planning policy relating to ecology, as set out in Appendix B.

It is recommended that a HMMP is devised for the site to cover a 30-year period, post construction, and includes management prescriptions that aim to achieve and maintain the target condition for each habitat type set out in the Metric. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition sheets should be used to inform this management plan, and any monitoring.

Should there be any changes to the landscape proposals on site, these will need to be reflected within an update to this BNG assessment.

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FIGURES

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Pre-development Habitat Plan

Figure 3 – Post-development Habitat Plan



Site Location Plan

Caversham, Reading



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Legend

- Red line boundary
- Ownership boundary

Notes:

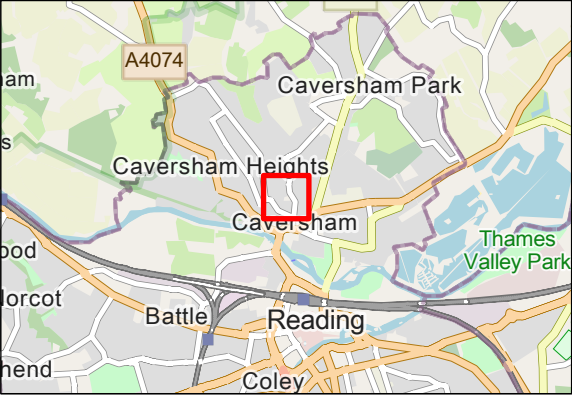
Drawn by: CHRIS.DAWE
Checked by: Alex Coggins

Figure No. 1
Revision No. B
29 January 2026

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Scale 1:2,000 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 471262E 175218N

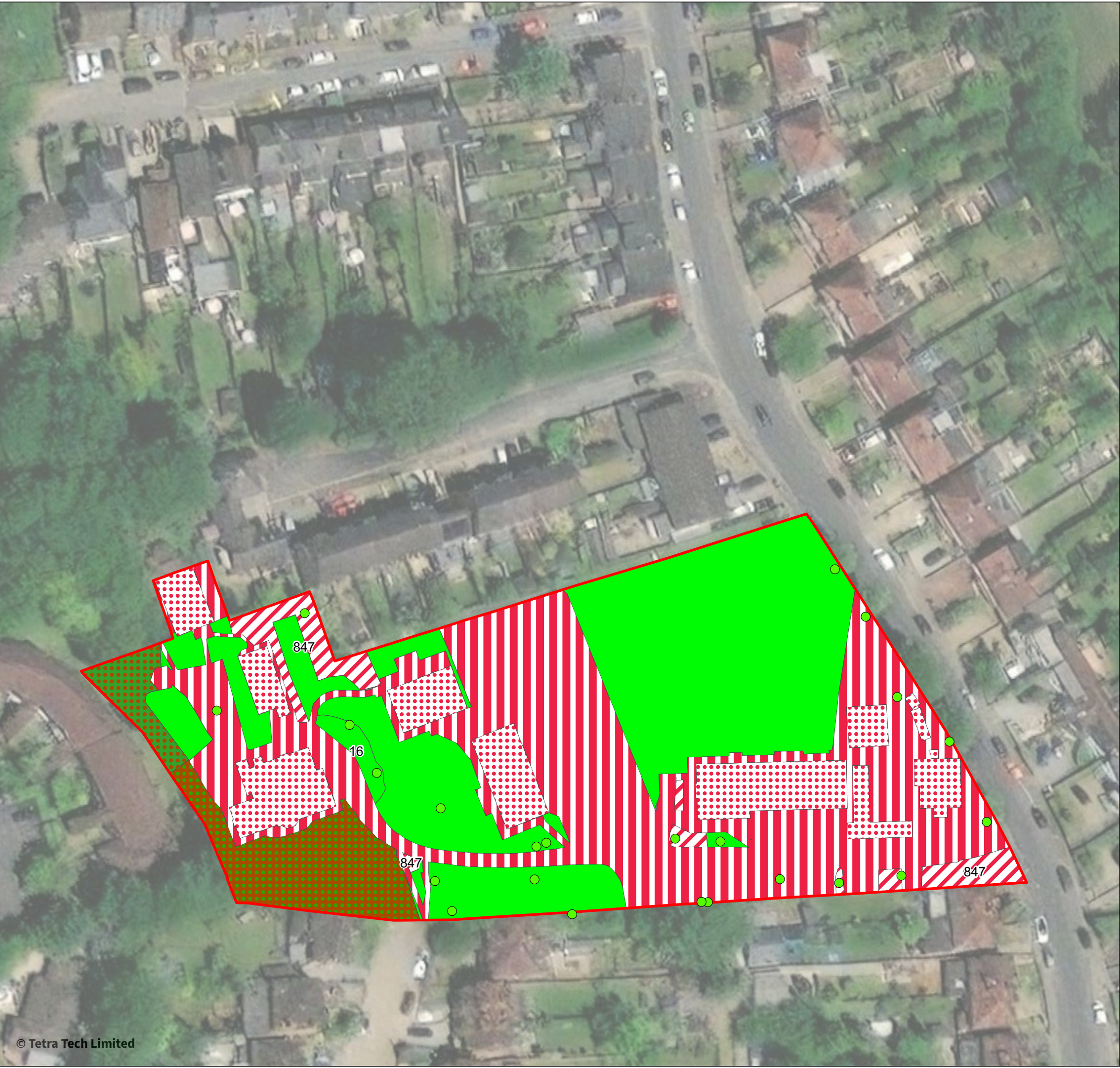
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Pre-Development Plan

Caversham, Reading



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Legend

-  Site boundary
-  g4 - Modified grassland
-  u1 - Built-up areas and gardens
-  u1b - Developed land, sealed surface
-  u1b5 - Buildings
-  w1g - Other woodland, broadleaved
-  w1h - Other woodland, mixed
-  Urban tree

Secondary codes:
16 - Tall Forbs
847 - Introduced shrub

Symbology defined by UK Habs. <https://ukhab.org/ukhab-documentation/>

Notes:

Drawn by: dylan.gussman
Checked by: Georgie Atkinson

Figure No. 2
Revision No. A
22 January 2026

0 8.5 17 25.5 34 Meters
Scale 1:700 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 471279E 175241N

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Post-Development Plan

Caversham, Reading



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Legend

-  Site boundary
-  g3c - Other neutral grassland
-  g4 - Modified grassland
-  u1 - Built-up areas and gardens
-  u1b - Developed land, sealed surface
-  u1b5 - Buildings
-  w1g - Other woodland, broadleaved
-  w1h - Other woodland, mixed
-  h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
-  Specimen shrub
-  Urban tree

Secondary codes:
847 - Introduced shrub

Symbology defined by UK Habs. <https://ukhab.org/ukhab-documentation/>

Notes:

Drawn by: CHRIS.DAWE
Checked by: Alex Coggins

Figure No. 3
Revision No. B
28 January 2026

0 8 16 24 32 Meters
Scale 1:700 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 471277E 175202N

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: REPORT CONDITIONS

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The whole of the report must be read as other sections of the report may contain information which puts into context the findings in any executive summary.

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The performance of environmental protection measures and of buildings and other structures in relation to acoustics, vibration, noise mitigation and other environmental issues is influenced to a large extent by the degree to which the relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the final design and specifications and the quality of workmanship and compliance with the specifications on site during construction. Tetra Tech accept no liability for issues with performance arising from such factors.

APPENDIX B: LANDSCAPING PROPOSALS

Former Hemdean House School,
Hemdean Road, Caversham

Landscape Masterplan

A	28.01.26	BNG comments	ACG
Rev	Date	Details	Drawn



ACD
ENVIRONMENTAL

HEAD OFFICE
Rodbourn Rail Business Centre, Grange Lane,
Malmesbury, SN16 0ES
Tel: 01666 825646

Unit 7, Godalming Business Centre,
Woolsack Way, Godalming, GU7 1XW
Tel: 01483 425714

email: mail@acdenv.co.uk
www.acdenvironmental.co.uk

planningissues
TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

scheme: Hemdean School,
Caversham

client: Planning Issues Ltd

drawing: Landscape Masterplan

date: Jan. 2026

scale: 1:500@A2

drawing no: PLAN24902 10

drawn: ACG checked: DKM

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LEGEND

Site Boundary



Existing trees and vegetation to be retained and protected



Proposed woodland planting to supplement woodland



Proposed ornamental shrub planting



Proposed wildflower planting



Proposed native trees



Proposed structural street trees within the development



Proposed specimen shrubs



Proposed hedge planting to plot frontages and shared areas



Main site access to open market flats



Retirement Living access



Proposed pedestrian connection

1.2 high metal railings

1.2 high timber post and rail fence

NOTES

- Existing trees are to be retained where possible and protected throughout the construction phase. These will be enhanced and supplemented with native understorey planting where necessary.
- Proposed native trees will be planted within the open spaces and along the boundary where it will integrate with the wider landscape whilst creating landscape buffers with the development where required.
- Structural trees along the main road and parking courts will create a natural vertical element for the development and enhance the street scene.
- Proposed ornamental planting is planned for plot frontages and shared areas, softening and creating an attractive streetscape within the development. Species have been chosen for their visual interest and low maintenance.
- Proposed meadow grassland with variety of species to increase biodiversity and ecological benefits as well as providing visual interest for visitors.

INDICATIVE PLANTING LIST:

Trees:

Small-leaved lime - *Tilia cordata*
Field maple - *Acer campestre*
Beech - *Fagus sylvatica*
Wild cherry - *Prunus avium*
Wild plum / Damson types - *Prunus domestica* subsp. *insititia*
Apple (crab apple) - *Malus sylvestris*
Willow - *Salix caprea*, *Salix fragilis*
Hawthorn - *Crataegus monogyna*

Core scrub areas:

30% *Crataegus monogyna*
20% *Prunus spinosa*
15% *Corylus avellana*
10% *Cornus sanguinea*
10% *Euonymus europaeus*
10% *Rosa canina*
5% *Viburnum lantana*

Woodland edge/understorey scrub:

20% Holly - *Ilex aquifolium*
20% Rowan - *Sorbus aucuparia*
25% Elder - *Sambucus nigra*
35% Wild privet - *Ligustrum vulgare*

PRECEDENT IMAGES



APPENDIX C: BASELINE CONDITION ASSESSMENT DATA

STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

HABITAT CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Project Number 784-B073665	Site Name Caversham	Date of Survey 24 July 2025	Surveyor Alex Coggins
Temperature 18°C	Cloud Cover 100%	Wind 0 - Calm	Precipitation No precipitation

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 1 Individual tree: Urban tree			
Location		Photograph	
 Maxar, Microsoft Esri C... Powered by Esri			
Habitat Description:			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	FAIL	Not native
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	PASS	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there	FAIL	Surrounded by hardstanding

	is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.		
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	None
Number of criteria passed		2	
Condition Assessment Rating			
POOR CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 2 Individual tree: Urban tree		
Location	Photograph	
 Maxar, Microsoft Esri C... Powered by Esri		
Habitat Description: Group		
Condition Assessment Criteria	Pass/Fail	Notes
A The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	PASS	Cherries
B The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no	PASS	

	individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).		
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	FAIL	Semi
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	FAIL	Surrounded by hardstanding
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	None
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	None
Number of criteria passed		2	
Condition Assessment Rating			
POOR CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 3 Individual tree: Urban tree	
Location	Photograph
	
Habitat Description: Group beech and acer	

Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	FAIL	
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	PASS	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	FAIL	Surrounded by hardstanding
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	
Number of criteria passed		2	
Condition Assessment Rating			
POOR CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 3 Individual tree: Urban tree	
Location	Photograph



Habitat Description:

Roadside group of trees

Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	FAIL	Mostly lime hybrids
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	PASS	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	FAIL	Base if trunks damaged.
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	
Number of criteria passed		2	
Condition Assessment Rating			
POOR CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 5 Individual tree: Urban tree			
Location		Photograph	
			
Habitat Description: Group of acers.			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	FAIL	
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	PASS	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	PASS	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	PASS	
Number of criteria passed		4	
Condition Assessment Rating			
MODERATE CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 6 Individual tree: Urban tree			
Location		Photograph	
 Maxar, Microsoft Esri C... Powered by Esri			
Habitat Description:			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	PASS	
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	PASS	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	PASS	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	50% hardstanding
Number of criteria passed		4	

Condition Assessment Rating
MODERATE CONDITION
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 7 Individual tree: Urban tree			
Location		Photograph	
 Maxar, Microsoft Esri C... Powered by Esri			
Habitat Description:			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	PASS	
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	FAIL	Semi
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	PASS	7

E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	50% hardstanding
Number of criteria passed			3
Condition Assessment Rating			
MODERATE CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 8 Individual tree: Urban tree			
Location		Photograph	
			
Habitat Description:			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	FAIL	Sycamore
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	PASS	

D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	FAIL	Has been cut historically and hardstanding beneath
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	PASS	Large cavities.
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	Hardstanding
Number of criteria passed		3	
Condition Assessment Rating			
MODERATE CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

9. INDIVIDUAL TREES CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: 9 Individual tree: Urban tree		
Location	Photograph	
		
Habitat Description: Sycamore and willow in north West of site		
Condition Assessment Criteria	Pass/Fail	Notes
A The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	FAIL	

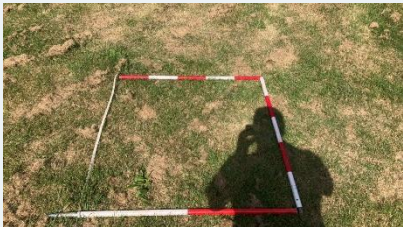
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	PASS	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	FAIL	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	PASS	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	FAIL	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	FAIL	
Number of criteria passed			
Condition Assessment Rating			
POOR CONDITION			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

24. WOODLAND CONDITION SHEET

Habitat Reference: W1 Woodland and forest: Other woodland; mixed	
Location	Photograph
 Maxar, Microsoft Esri C... Powered by Esri	

Habitat Description:		
Quadrat Data		
W1_Q1		
 Maxar, Microsoft Esri C... Powered by Esri		
Common Name	Latin Name	Dafor
Cherry laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	2 - Abundant
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	2 - Abundant
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	4 - Occasional
Western Red-Cedar	<i>Thuja plicata</i>	5 - Rare
Condition Assessment Criteria		
Indicator	Score	Notes
A Age distribution of trees	2	
B Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	2	Deer
C Invasive plant species	1	
D Number of native tree species	1	
E Cover of native tree and shrub species	1	
F Open space within woodland	1	
G Woodland regeneration	2	
H Tree health	2	
I Vegetation and ground flora	1	
J Woodland vertical structure	2	
K Veteran trees	1	
L Amount of deadwood	1	
M Woodland disturbance	2	
Number of criteria passed		19
Condition Assessment Rating		
POOR CONDITION		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score		

GRASSLAND CONDITION SHEET

TN1																								
Description			Photos																					
Quadrat 1 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Common Name</th> <th>Latin Name</th> <th>DAFOR</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Perennial rye-grass</td> <td><i>Lolium perenne</i></td> <td>1 - Dominant</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ribwort plantain</td> <td><i>Plantago lanceolata</i></td> <td>5 - Rare</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White clover</td> <td><i>Trifolium repens</i></td> <td>5 - Rare</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR	Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	1 - Dominant	Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	5 - Rare	White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	5 - Rare										
Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR																						
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	1 - Dominant																						
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	5 - Rare																						
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	5 - Rare																						
British National Grid (m): 471299E, 175214N																								
TN2																								
Description			Photos																					
Quadrat 2 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Common Name</th> <th>Latin Name</th> <th>DAFOR</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Perennial rye-grass</td> <td><i>Lolium perenne</i></td> <td>1 - Dominant</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yarrow</td> <td><i>Achillea millefolium</i></td> <td>3 - Frequent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Daisy</td> <td><i>Bellis perennis</i></td> <td>4 - Occasional</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cat's-ear</td> <td><i>Hypochaeris radicata</i></td> <td>5 - Rare</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red fescue</td> <td><i>Festuca rubra</i></td> <td>5 - Rare</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White clover</td> <td><i>Trifolium repens</i></td> <td>5 - Rare</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR	Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	1 - Dominant	Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	3 - Frequent	Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	4 - Occasional	Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	5 - Rare	Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	5 - Rare	White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	5 - Rare	
Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR																						
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	1 - Dominant																						
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	3 - Frequent																						
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	4 - Occasional																						
Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	5 - Rare																						
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	5 - Rare																						
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	5 - Rare																						

British National Grid (m): 471311E, 175229N			TN3	
Description			Photos	
Quadrat 3				
Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR		
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	1 - Dominant		
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	3 - Frequent		
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	5 - Rare		
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	5 - Rare		
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	5 - Rare		
British National Grid (m): 471285E, 175177N				

TN4				
Description			Photos	
Quadrat 4				
Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR		
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	1 - Dominant		
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	4 - Occasional		
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	5 - Rare		

White clover		Trifolium repens	5 - Rare
British National Grid (m): 471261E, 175187N			
TN5			
Description			Photos
Quadrat 5			
Common Name	Latin Name	DAFOR	
Cock's-foot	Dactylis glomerata	1 - Dominant	
Annual meadow-grass	Poa annua	5 - Rare	
Dandelion	Taraxacum agg.	5 - Rare	
Germander speedwell	Veronica chamaedrys	5 - Rare	
Hogweed	Heracleum sphondylium	5 - Rare	
British National Grid (m): 471237E, 175216N			

Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass/Fail	Notes
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m², please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	FAIL	Less than 6 over 5 quadrats, therefore poor condition.
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	FAIL	Approx 90% <7cm due as regularly mown
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).	PASS	None

Caversham, Reading
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

	Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.		
D	Physical damage is 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.	PASS	No evidence
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	FAIL	0%
F	Cover of bracken Pteridium aquilinum is less than 20%.	PASS	None
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	PASS	None within sward itself
Number of criteria passed		3	
Condition Assessment Rating			
POOR CONDITION			

APPENDIX D: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

HABITAT ASSESSMENT

Habitats

Pre-development

The pre-development habitats present on site were mapped in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Professional Edition V2 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). These habitats were assessed during the site survey and, where necessary, were updated to reflect the habitats as currently present on site. The pre-development habitats are shown in Figure 2. The area of identified habitats are calculated in hectares (ha) to two decimal places, ignoring linear features such as hedgerows or ditches (the area should be measured to the centre line of such features).

The habitats were converted into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024a) from the UKHab classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023), as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: UKHab code and conversion into the Metric category

UKHab Code and secondary codes	Corresponding BNG Metric category
Modified grassland (g4)	Grassland – Modified
Built-up areas and gardens (u1)	Urban - Developed land; sealed surface
Developed land (u1b)	Urban - Developed land; sealed surface
Buildings (u1b5)	Urban - Developed land; sealed surface
Other woodland, broadleaved (w1g)	Woodland and forest – Other woodland; broadleaved
Other woodland, mixed (w1h)	Woodland and forest – Other woodland; mixed
Urban Tree	Individual Trees – Urban Tree
Built-up areas and gardens (u1) Secondary Code: 847 - Introduced shrub	Urban – Introduced Shrub
Modified grassland (g4) Secondary Code: 16 – Tall Forbs	Sparsely Vegetated Land – Tall Forbs

Post-development

Each of the post-development habitats, as set out on the Post Development Plan (Figure 3) and Landscape Plan (Appendix E drawing number PLAN24092 10), were assigned a UKHab category which was considered to best represent the habitat present post-development, this was then converted to a BNG Metric category. See Figure 3 for the post-development habitats and Table 8 for the conversion categories.

Table 8: Post-development landscaped habitats and their conversion into UKHab and BNG category

Habitat terminology on Landscape Plan (Appendix F) Drawing: PLAN24092 10	UKHab Code	Corresponding BNG Metric Category
Hard standing	u1b - Developed land, sealed surface	Urban- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
Building	u1b5 - Buildings	Urban- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
Proposed structural street trees within the development	u1 – Built-up areas and gardens Secondary code - 32 Scattered trees (Urban tree)	Individual trees – Urban Tree
Proposed wildflower planting	g3c – Other neutral grassland	Grassland – Other neutral grassland
Proposed woodland planting to supplement woodland	w1g - Other woodland, broadleaved	Woodland and forest – Other woodland; broadleaved
Proposed woodland planting to supplement woodland	w1h - Other woodland, mixed	Woodland and forest – Other woodland; mixed
Proposed specimen shrubs	u1 - Built-up areas and gardens Secondary Code: 847- Introduced shrub	Urban – Introduced Shrub
Proposed hedge planting to plot frontages and shared areas	h2b - Non – Native and ornamental hedgerow	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
Proposed native trees	g3c – Other neutral grassland Secondary code - 32 Scattered trees (Urban tree)	Individual trees – Urban Tree
Proposed ornamental shrub planting	u1 - Built-up areas and gardens Secondary Code: 847- Introduced shrub	Urban – Introduced Shrub

Habitat 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 (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024b). The categories for distinctiveness within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric are shown within Table 9.

Table 9 Categories and scores for distinctiveness

Distinctiveness Category	Categories	Score
Very high	Priority Habitats as defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that are highly threatened, internationally scarce and require conservation action, for example blanket bog. Small amount of remaining habitat with a high proportion unprotected by designation. Critically Endangered European Red List habitats. Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch.	8
High	Priority Habitats as defined in Section 41 of the NERC Act requiring conservation action, for example lowland fens. Remaining Priority Habitats not in very high distinctiveness band and other Near Threatened and Vulnerable Red List habitats. Species-rich native hedgerow with trees; Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch; or Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch.	6
Medium	Semi-natural habitats not classed as a Priority Habitat but with significant wildlife benefit, for example mixed scrub. Arable field margins (Priority Habitat only). Species-rich native hedgerow; Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch; Native hedgerow with trees; Ecologically valuable line of trees; or Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch.	4
Low	Habitat of limited biodiversity value for example temporary grass and clover ley. Agricultural and urban land of lower biodiversity value. Native hedgerow; Line of trees; or Line of trees - associated with bank or ditch.	2
Very low (Hedgerow module)	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	1
Very low (area and watercourse module)	Little or no biodiversity value for example hard standing or sealed surface	0

Habitat Condition

The condition of each habitat is assessed using the methods set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric - The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology November 2023 (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024c).

This approach determines how many of the condition criteria descriptions for each habitat type are met or are not met. For each habitat type, thresholds then apply for the numbers of condition criteria that must be met.

Conditions and associated scores in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric are as follows:

- Good: 3
- Fairly Good: 2.5
- Moderate: 2
- Fairly Poor: 1.5
- Poor: 1

- Condition Assessment N/A: 1
- N/A - Other: 0

Hedgerows and Line of Trees have a simplified condition assessment of Good, Moderate or Poor.

A number of lower distinctiveness habitats such as cropland, urban habitats and bramble scrub are assigned default values and do not require a detailed condition assessment. The details of all habitats, hedgerows and rivers which are automatically assigned a poor condition value are set out within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology November 2023 (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024c).

Individual Trees

For individual trees (not including lines of trees or woodland) their area is calculated from stem diameter, which equates to a specified size group (small, medium, large or very large). Full details on how this is calculated is defined within the User Guide. The number of individual trees of each size is then input to the 'Urban Tree Helper' table within The Metric, and an area is given which is entered into The Metric as a habitat area. The sizes of urban trees are measured using their diameter at breast height (DBH) and defined as:

- Small-sized tree = greater than 7.5 cm and less than or equal to 30 cm;
- Medium-sized tree = greater than 30 cm and less than or equal to 60 cm;
- Large tree = greater than 60 cm and less than or equal to 90 cm; and
- Very large tree = greater than 90 cm.

Strategic Significance

The strategic significance of a site within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric is based upon several factors such as but not limited to:

- If the site is identified within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) area; and
- If an LNRS has not yet been published, if the site is identified within a local planning policy as a biodiversity and nature or green infrastructure improvement areas.

Strategic significance scores in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric are detailed in Table 10.

Table 10: Strategic significance and corresponding scores

Condition	Criteria Met	Score
High strategic significance	Where there is a published LNRS: • The location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Habitat Map as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of that LNRS; and • The intervention is consistent with the potential measure proposed for that location. or	1.15

	Where there is no published LNRS and the habitat type is mapped and described as locally ecologically important within a specific location, within documents specified by the relevant planning authority.	
Medium strategic significance	This category cannot be applied where the LNRS is published, or where the habitat and location is included within other strategic documents specified by the relevant planning authority. Users should: • Explain how the habitat type is ecologically important within a specific location • Demonstrate the importance of that habitat in providing ecological linkage to other strategically significant locations • Use professional judgement	1.1
Low Strategic Significance	Where the definitions for high and medium strategic significance are not met.	1

Risk Factors

As part of any proposed habitat creation and enhancement, risk factors must be considered to correct for disparity, delay or risk; these are:

- Time to target condition;
- Difficulty of restoration / creation; and
- If habitat created is undertaken in advance or delayed prior to the development.

To take this into account, creation of a habitat which will take many years to get to target condition or is difficult to recreate would have a reduced biodiversity value compared to the same habitat already in situ. Therefore, to compensate for loss of that original habitat a larger area would be required as an offset.

Default values are provided for a range of habitats as part of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. These may be altered if informed by knowledge of the site and proposed management prescriptions, as detailed within the habitat assessment tables. The habitat creation in advance or delay can be changed based on proposed timelines of the development, but this must be secured by a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) and with agreement with the consenting authority.

APPENDIX E: POST DEVELOPMENT HABITAT CONDITIONS AND MANAGEMENT

The below habitat creation and enhancements measures are based on the required management to fulfil the habitat conditions as per the DEFRA Technical Document (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2024c). A separate detailed Habitat Management Plan will be required to fulfil the management and monitoring requirements for the below created and enhanced habitats.

Habitat type	Habitat measure	Target Condition	Time to target condition	Habitat condition sheet	Condition criteria	Outline habitat management
Urban – Vegetated garden	Creation	N/A	1 year	Urban	This condition is pre-set in the Metric.	NA – no set prescription required due to the habitat’s pre-set condition.
Grassland – Other neutral grassland	Creation	Moderate	5 years	Grassland (medium to high distinctiveness)	This condition is pre-set in the Metric. 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	. In order to create and manage this habitat to reach the proposed condition, the following measures are recommended: - Carry out suitable planting regime (e.g., wildflower seed mix suited to the site’s soil type). - Manage with selective weed control and remove all arisings following any cuts; and

					- Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed. - Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%. Combined cover of	Any bracken, scrub or invasive species identified is removed.
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					species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage accounts for less than 5% of total area. No invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA5) are present There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type	
Grassland - Modified grassland	Creation	Poor	1 year	Grassland (Low distinctiveness)	In order to achieve this condition score, the following criteria are highlighted below: There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs	In order to create and manage this habitat to reach low condition, the following measures are recommended: Carry out suitable planting regime (e.g., seed mix suited to the site's soil type); and

					- Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed. Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). - Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include	Any pernicious weeds, bracken, scrub, or invasive species identified is removed.
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					excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities. • Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10, including localised areas • Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%. There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).	
Individual trees - Urban trees	Creation	Moderate	27 years	Individual Trees	In order to achieve this condition score, the following criteria are highlighted below:	In order to create and manage this habitat to reach the proposed condition, the following

					• Native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species). • The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected	measures are recommended: • Carry out planting in accordance with planting scheme • Maintenance (i.e., pruning regime is completed only where necessary (e.g., reasons of health and safety) to allow trees to retain much of their expected canopy for their age and height); and • Any failed planting will be replaced at the next available opportunity (i.e., September each year) for the first five years.
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					canopy for their age range and height. More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	
Urban – developed land; sealed surface	Creation	N/A	0 years	Urban	Target condition is ‘poor’ in one year.	N/A
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	Creation	Poor	1 yr	Hedgerow	The target condition (Poor) is pre-set in the metric.	N/A – no set prescription required due to the habitat’s pre-set condition.

APPENDIX F: BNG LEGISLATION

Environment Act 2021 - Schedule 7A – Part 1

- “(1) The biodiversity gain objective is met in relation to development for which planning permission is granted if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat by at least the relevant percentage.*
- (2) The biodiversity value attributable to the development is the total of—*
- (a) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat,*
 - (b) the biodiversity value, in relation to the development, of any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development, and*
 - (c) the biodiversity value of any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.*
- (3) The relevant percentage is 10%.”*

National Planning Policy Framework - Published the 27 March 2012, updated December 2024

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the top tier of planning policy. The Framework provides guidance to local authorities and other agencies on planning policy and the operation of the planning system. Section 15 relates to ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’. Paragraph 187- 201

Relevant policies in relation to planning application include Paragraphs:

“187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

188. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework^[1]; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries

192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- (a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity [2]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation [3]; and
- (b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- (a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- (b) 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;

^[1] Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality

^[2] Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system

^[3] Where areas that are part of the Nature Recovery Network are identified in plans, it may be appropriate to specify the types of development that may be suitable within them

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons [4] and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

(d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

194. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

(a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;

(b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and

(c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

195. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site

^[1] Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality

² Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system

³ Where areas that are part of the Nature Recovery Network are identified in plans, it may be appropriate to specify the types of development that may be suitable within them

⁴ For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat

⁵ Potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area, candidate Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar site

see here for full details: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

Reading Borough Local Plan

Policy EN12 – Biodiversity and the Green Network

- a) The identified Green Network, the key elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network. The Green Network comprises:
- Sites with identified biodiversity interest - Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, protected and priority species and their habitats, Priority and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, and the River Thames and all its tributaries (including the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal); and
 - Areas with potential for biodiversity value and which stitch the Green Network together – designated Local Green Space and open green spaces, and existing and potential Green Links.
- New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of green space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.
- b) On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:
- Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and
 - Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.

[4] For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat

	In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is “no net loss” of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.
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