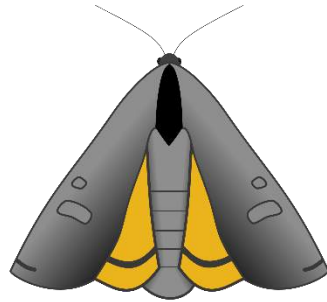




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Ivy Farm, West Yatton

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

20th November 2025

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Executive Summary

Christian Glaesel is seeking planning permission to construct a horse arena on land at Ivy Farm, West Yatton, Chippenham, SN14 7EW, centred on national grid reference ST 85839 74828. The development site includes a former pasture field which had recently been used as a construction storage area.

Noctua Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Christian Glaesel to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the site to identify any ecological constraints to the works, provide recommendations to enable compliance with planning policy and wildlife legislation, and determine how the site can achieve BNG.

It was assessed that BNG could not be achieved within the development site due to the small space available. Therefore, an additional location within the land holdings of the client was chosen to be included within the red line boundary and enhanced to provide the necessary habitat units needed to achieve the required BNG.

The development site supported a total of one UKHab classification. None of the habitats were considered to be UK Priority Habitat or listed within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

The additional site area supported a total of one UKHab classification. None of the habitats were considered to be UK Priority Habitat or listed within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

No evidence of protected or notable species was identified within either site. However, both sites were considered to offer suitable habitat to support [REDACTED] foraging bats, nesting birds, a common assemblage of invertebrates, reptiles, and hedgehog.

The BNG assessment determined that the proposed development has the potential to deliver a BNG of 0.40 habitat units (14.58% net gain) if the habitat creation/enhancements outlined within this assessment are delivered. The proposed habitats to be created and/or enhanced are considered to be achievable and appropriate for the size and type of development.

The assessment concluded that the proposed development would likely proceed with minimal ecological impact if certain mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures are adhered to as follows:

- A precautionary method statement should be followed during the proposed works, and it should include measures to protect adjacent habitats, badger, reptiles, hedgehog and other species;
- A nesting bird survey should be undertaken if removal of any long-sward grassland is required during the nesting bird season;
- The grassland within the additional site should be managed such that long-sward grassland suitable for ground nesting birds can develop during the nesting bird season; and
- A long-term Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be produced with details on how habitats will reach their target condition for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Further advice from an ecologist should be sought if the scope of the proposed work changes, or if the works are delayed by more than 18 months from the date of the most recent survey.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Site location

- 1.1.1 The site proposed for development (hereafter referred to as the 'development site') comprised a parcel of land at Ivy Farm, West Yatton, Chippenham, SN14 7EW, centred on national grid reference ST 85839 74828 (Figure 1). The development site comprises a grassland field.
- 1.1.2 Another site within the client's landholdings (hereafter referred to as the 'additional site') was chosen to provide land for habitat enhancements in order to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The additional site comprises a parcel of a pasture field bounded by fencing and a hedgerow along its western elevation, located at Ivy Farm, centred on national grid reference ST 86050 75231 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.3 Throughout the report, certain sections which apply to both the development site and the additional site are referred to as 'both sites'.

1.2 Background to the activity

- 1.2.1 Christian Glaesel is seeking planning permission to construct a horse arena on the site.
- 1.2.2 Noctua Ecology Ltd were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the sites to identify any ecological constraints to the works, provide recommendations to enable compliance with planning policy and wildlife legislation, and determine how the sites can achieve BNG.
- 1.2.3 At the time of writing the report, the assessment was based on the proposals within the following documents produced by Hapticity Architects:
- *Proposed riding arena proposed site plan* (Reference: 218-PL20);
 - *Proposed riding arena Elevations, sections and gate details* (Reference: 218-PL22); and
 - *Proposed riding arena fencing & floor build up details* (Reference: 218-PL23).

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The objectives of the assessment were as follows:
- Identify relevant statutory designated areas of conservation importance and features of ecological significance within the on-site land and off-site land and within a 2km radius of the sites;
 - Broadly categorise habitat types within the sites in accordance with standard UKHab habitats;
 - Categorise habitats in relation to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric;
 - Undertake calculations using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric to determine if the development can achieve Biodiversity Net Gain;
 - Assess the potential for the presence of protected species and species of principal conservation importance within the sites;
 - Assess the potential ecological impact of the works;
 - Provide recommendations for further surveys, if required;

- Inform the design of a mitigation strategy to avoid or minimise potential impacts on protected habitats and species; and
- Advise of any ecological compensation or enhancement requirements.

2.0 Legislation

2.1 Wildlife legislation

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

2.1.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the main legislation enacted to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive). This is supplemented by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006. As such, the following actions are considered an offence:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (some exceptions) and disturb any bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act, or its dependent young while it is nesting;
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 of the Act;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 of the Act;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb some Schedule 5 animal species while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection;
- Intentionally or recklessly picking, uprooting, damaging or selling plant species listed under Schedule 8 of the act; or
- Cause or allow the spread of any invasive non-native species that is listed on Schedule 9 of the Act.

2.1.2 Species listed within Schedule 5 include, but are not limited to, bats (all species), great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), reptiles, otter (*Lutra lutra*), and water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*).

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

2.1.3 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) transpose the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (Habitats Directive) into English law. This makes it illegal to deliberately capture, kill or disturb wild animals listed under Schedule 2 of the Regulations. This includes the damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place of those species. The breeding/resting site is protected even when no animal is present at the time. The Habitats Regulations 2017 will continue to implement the Habitats Directive and certain elements of the Birds Directives in England. The Habitats Regulations are likely to remain in place for some time now that the UK has exited the EU.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

2.1.4 The NERC Act 2006 places a duty of regard on authorities for biodiversity and nature conservation during their operations. Section 41 of the Act refers to a requirement for authorities to publish a list of species and habitats which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

- 2.1.5 The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 protects badgers (*Meles meles*) and their setts. It is an offence under the act to kill, injure, or take badgers. It is also an offence to destroy, damage or obstruct an active badger sett, or to disturb badgers while they are using their sett.

2.2 Planning policy

- 2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DLUHC, 2023) sets out the UK Government's planning policies for England and explains how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF specifies that, when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should refuse applications that would cause significant harm to biodiversity if the project does not provide adequate mitigation or compensation.
- 2.2.2 The Wiltshire Council's local policy framework comprises several elements, the most relevant to this assessment being:
- The Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2015-2026); and
 - The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, 2008).
- 2.2.3 The Core Strategy refers to biodiversity, habitats and species. The policies most pertinent to this development include:
- Core Policy 50: Sites, Species and Habitats; and
 - Core Policy 52: Green infrastructure.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Desk study

3.1.1 The desk study comprised a compilation of ecological information relating to the site and the area within a 2km radius of the site. The following information was gathered:

- The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted to identify statutory designated sites of conservation importance and search the European Protected Species Licensing layers for records. Where granted European Protected Species Licences had modifications, only the most recent licence was listed unless previous licences were considerably different;
- The Natural England website was used to obtain citation details of the statutory designated sites; and
- MAGIC was used to identify potential habitats of importance, and the Google Earth website were used to assess the connectivity of the site to the local habitats.

3.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3.2.1 The survey was completed in accordance with the following best practice guidance:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester;
- Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L., and Treweek, J. (2020). *UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1* at <http://www.ukhab.org/>; and
- UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <http://www.ukhab.org/>).

3.2.2 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey of the development site was undertaken on the 18th June 2025 by Joseph Wilkie, Bachelor of Science (BSc) with Honours (Hons) and Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM). The weather conditions were recorded as 23°C, 15% cloud cover and dry with a light breeze. An update survey of the development site and survey of the additional site was carried out on the 13th November 2025 by Joseph Wilkie, BSc (Hons), ACIEEM. The weather conditions were recorded as 14°C, 30% cloud cover, dry and bright with a light breeze.

3.2.3 A walk-over survey of the site was undertaken. The vegetation was described and photographed, and indicative higher plant species lists compiled for the habitat types present on site. Notes were made of any notable features or local variations in the plant composition. The habitats were classified using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023). Dominant, notable, and invasive non-native plant species were recorded. The site was assessed for any features that may be of value to protected and notable animal species, and any evidence of such species was recorded.

3.3 Biodiversity Net Gain assessment

- 3.3.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was completed in accordance with the following best practice guidance:
- Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L and Treweek J. (2020). *UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1* at <http://ukhab.org>;
 - Defra (2024). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide*. Defra, UK; and
 - UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <http://www.ukhab.org/>).
- 3.3.2 During the initial PEA and update survey, habitat conditions were assessed using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat condition assessment sheets.
- 3.3.3 The existing baseline habitats identified during the PEA survey and those confirmed present via aerial imagery were mapped using QGIS as accurately as possible to create a baseline habitat plan. Then, the proposed site plan was georeferenced and used to draw the proposed site habitat plan as accurately as possible. QGIS was used to calculate the habitat areas and lengths, which were inputted into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (hereafter referred as the "Biodiversity Metric").
- 3.3.4 The Biodiversity Metric was used to calculate an estimated Biodiversity Net Gain based on the proposed development. This version of the metric was released on 3rd July 2025..
- 3.3.5 The Biodiversity Metric enables the number of biodiversity units, both before and after proposed land-use changes, to be calculated, based on habitat type, condition and strategic positioning. The Biodiversity Metric treats area habitats (such as grassland and woodland), linear habitats (such as hedgerows), and river habitats separately. Units from these three main habitat categories cannot be summed or exchanged with each other.
- 3.3.6 The strategic positioning score was based on whether the habitat parcel is located within a Focus Area for Nature Recovery as detailed within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Wiltshire and Swindon. In line with the current guidance, all baseline habitats were classified as having low strategic significance. A habitat parcel was categorised with high strategic significance if the interventions proposed within the habitat parcel are consistent with a potential measure detailed within the LNRS. Otherwise, if the proposed intervention within the habitat parcel was not consistent with a potential measure proposed by the LNRS, the strategic significance was recorded as low.
- 3.3.7 For full transparency, copies of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool with comments, was supplied electronically with this report.

3.4 Constraints

- 3.4.1 The site surveys were not intended to identify all species present within the site. The survey objective was to broadly identify habitats and indicate the potential for the site to support protected and notable species.
- 3.4.2 The survey of the additional area was undertaken outside of the optimal survey period for botanical survey. However, based on the existing management of the site and indicator species present, it was considered that broad habitat types could be identified with confidence.

- 3.4.3 Mapping of areas and lengths of habitats was determined from aerial photographs, using approximate mapping with QGIS software, and are not precisely accurate.
- 3.4.4 A full data search from the local environmental records centre was not requested given that the site was small and the scale of impact was considered to be low.

4.0 Results

4.1 Site context

- 4.1.1 Ivy Farm is situated in a rural location, approximately 4km to the west of the town of Chippenham, Wiltshire (Figure 1). The development site is situated within the centre of a pasture field which is bound to the north by a residential garden, east by a horse paddock, west by a hedgerow and south by a hedgerow and tree line. The additional site forms the northern part of a pasture field, bounded to the north and east by fencing, to the west by a hedgerow, with the remainder of the field located to the south.
- 4.1.2 Further pasture and arable land and low density residential and agricultural development is present within the local landscape. Large areas of woodland (including ancient woodland) and lowland calcareous grassland are located further to the north and west and across the local landscape. There were a few small streams and other waterbodies within the local landscape.

4.2 Designated sites

Statutory designated sites

- 4.2.1 Four statutory designated sites were identified within a 2km radius of the development site (Table 1).

Table 1. Statutory designated sites within 2km of the development site (table continues).

Site	Designation	Approx. distance / direction from site	Reason for designation
West Yatton Down	SSSI	915m / north-west	The site is an outstanding example of a lightly grazed and agriculturally unimproved limestone grassland. The steeper slopes have an abundance of many species of grasses and herbs as well as a diverse range of butterfly.
Honeybrook Farm	SSSI	1360m / south-west	Site comprises a series of unimproved neutral to calcareous hay meadows, unimproved limestone grassland, ancient semi-natural woodland, a small lake and an undisturbed meandering stretch of river with plant and invertebrate interest.
Rack Hill	SSSI	1420m / north-west	The best known example in Wiltshire of a lightly grazed Jurassic Limestone sward with a mosaic of grassland scrub transitions supporting a diverse butterfly population.

Site	Designation	Approx. distance / direction from site	Reason for designation
Dank's Down and Truckle Hill	SSSI	1580m / west	Two blocks of botanically rich oolitic limestone grassland. Site also includes scrub and woodland habitats suitable for a range of species.
Key			
SSSI	Site of special scientific interest		

4.2.2 The site was located within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) that requires consultation between the local planning authority and Natural England.

4.2.3 The Wiltshire Council supplementary planning document identifies the site as being located on the edge of a Core Area for lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) associated with the Bradford-on-Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Wiltshire Council, 2015).

4.3 Species records

4.3.1 There was one record of a granted European Protected Species (EPS) Licence application relating to bats identified within a 2km radius of the development site (Table 2).

4.3.2 Local survey work by Noctua Ecology had also identified bat day roosts of low numbers relating to common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and Myotis species (*Myotis* sp.) within the farmhouse located approximately 160m to the north of the development site.

Table 2. Records of granted European Protected Species Licence applications within 2km of the development site.

Case reference	Species	Licence start – end year	Approx. Distance / direction from site	Licensed activity
2017-28019-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared bat, Lesser horseshoe bat	2017-2024	1830m / south-west	Destruction of a resting place

4.3.3 Records of four great crested newt (GCN) class survey licence returns were identified from a location approximately 640m to the west of the development site (Table 3).

Table 3. Records of great crested newt license returns and pond survey results within 2km of the development site (table continues).

Activity	GCN presence	Date	Approx. Distance / direction from site
Licence return	Yes	19/04/2017	640m / west
Licence return	Yes	09/05/2017	640m / west

Activity	GCN presence	Date	Approx. Distance / direction from site
Licence return	Yes	17/05/2017	640m / west
Licence return	Yes	22/05/2017	640m / west

4.4 Priority Habitat

- 4.4.1 There were records of broadleaved woodland and traditional orchard priority habitat located within 500m of the development site (Table 4).

Table 4. Records of priority habitat within 500m of the development site.

Habitat type	Distance from site
Broadleaved woodland	Two areas within 500m of the site. Closest located approximately 100m to the west.
Traditional orchard	Two areas within 500m of the site. Closest located approximately 375m to the north-west.

4.5 Development site habitat descriptions

- 4.5.1 Habitats identified during the initial PEA survey on the 18th June 2025 identified three UKHab classifications within the site, and evidence of recent habitat degradation as a result of having used the site as a compound for nearby construction works. The follow up survey on the 13th November 2025 found the site mostly restored to flat, bare topsoil and grassland with all earth piles removed. These habitats were not used for the BNG calculation but were used to help inform the assessment of the true baseline habitats prior to the habitat degradation.
- 4.5.2 Aerial imagery¹ and discussions with the client identified the development site to be part of a grassland field, which was determined to be one UK Habitat (UKHab) classification (Figure 2). This habitat was used as the baseline habitat for the BNG calculation. The total area of the site was calculated as 0.485ha for the purpose of this report. The habitats identified during the surveys are discussed below, followed by a description of the habitat used to inform the BNG calculation.

PEA survey habitats

Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (u1c)

- 4.5.3 During the initial PEA survey, an area in the north of the development site was in use as a carpark and storage area for a construction site off-site to the north (Photos 1-2). The ground was covered with gravel with a low level of vegetation around the margins only. During the follow up survey this area was mostly bare ground with pioneering vegetation including ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), poppy species (*Papaver* sp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), greater burdock (*Arctium lappa*) and wild

¹ Google Earth historical imagery from June 2023

mustard (*Sinapis arvensis*) (Photo 3). Aerial imagery from 2023 shows this area to be grassland.



Photo 1. Parking and storage area in the north of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 2. Parking and storage area in the north of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 3. Bare ground and new growth (13th November 2025).

- 4.5.4 Unvegetated areas of bare earth caused by heavy machinery were present in the centre of the site during the initial PEA survey (Photos 4-5). Earth had been piled into mounds where ruderal/ephemeral vegetation was present (see below description for ruderal/ephemeral). During the follow up survey the land was level with bare ground and a low level of ephemeral vegetation as above (Photo 6). Aerial imagery from 2023 shows this area to be grassland.



Photo 4. Disturbed ground in the centre of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 5. Disturbed ground in the centre of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 6. Bare ground and new growth (13th November 2025).

Modified grassland (g4)

- 4.5.5 Grassland was present in the south and east of the site during both the initial PEA and follow up surveys (Photos 7-10). The area was predominantly of a medium sward length and species-poor. The area appeared to be unmanaged. Areas around the margins were disturbed and of a shorter sward. Grass species present included perennial rye grass, cock's-foot, Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and meadow fescue (*Shendonorus pratense*). The forb layer included field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), common yarrow, vetch species (*Vicia* sp.), dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) and cut-leaved cranes-bill (*Geranium dissectum*). Other species including dock species (*Rumex* sp.), fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), scarlet pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and common fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*) were present in a low abundance around the margins. Botanical quadrat surveys undertaken across a transect identified an abundance between 3-6 species present per 1m². It was considered that this section of grassland was representative of the site prior to the habitat degradation given that there were no signs of degradation.



Photo 7. Grassland in the east of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 8. Grassland in the south of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 9. Grassland in the south of the site (13th November 2025).



Photo 10. Grassland in the south of the site (13th November 2025).

Sparsely vegetated urban land (u1f) Ruderal or ephemeral (81)

- 4.5.6 Patchy vegetation was present on earthen mounds in the centre of the site during the initial PEA survey (Photos 11-14). Species present included ruderals such as common nettle, dock species, sow thistle species (*Sonchus* sp.), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), bristly oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echinoides*), creeping thistle, common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), red deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*), creeping buttercup, fat hen, garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*). In addition, other ephemerals were present such as scarlet pimpernel, poppy species, wild pansy (*Viola tricolor*), scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), common chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), common fumitory, pineapple weed (*Matricaria discoidea*), petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*), nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*), field bindweed and redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*). Grass species were present in a low density with species including cock's-foot, perennial rye grass, timothy, meadow fescue and Yorkshire fog. This area was flat and predominantly bare ground during the follow up survey (Photo 15). Aerial imagery from 2023 shows this area to be grassland.



Photo 11. Vegetation on disturbed ground in the centre of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 12. Vegetation on disturbed ground in the centre of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 13. Vegetation on disturbed ground in the centre of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 14. Vegetation on disturbed ground in the centre of the site (18th June 2025).



Photo 15. Bare ground and new growth (13th November 2025).

Biodiversity Net Gain baseline habitats

Modified grassland (g4)

- 4.5.7 Historic aerial imagery from 2023 showed the entirety of the site to be grassland (Figure 2). Full assessment was not possible due to the condition present at the time of survey, however this was assumed to be modified grassland based on the undisturbed grassland habitats present immediately adjacent to and in the south of the site and the previous management of the site and surrounding area as an enclosed horse grazed paddock.
- 4.5.8 This area was therefore categorised as modified grassland for the purposes of the Biodiversity Metric, and a total of 0.485ha was inputted into the Biodiversity Metric. A condition assessment recorded a poor condition, using the south of the site and adjacent undisturbed grassland areas a proxy (Appendix A).

4.6 Additional site habitat descriptions

- 4.6.1 The additional site formed the northern part of a larger pasture field grazed by horses (Figure 1, Photo 16). The additional site was bound to the west by a managed hedgerow, to the north and east by fencing and to the south by further pasture. Further pasture and arable fields bounded by hedgerows, fencing and dry-stone walls were present in the local landscape.



Photo 16. View from the south-west of the additional site.

- 4.6.2 The survey identified one UK Habitat (UKHab) classification within the additional site (Figure 3). The habitat was described below. The total area of the additional site was calculated as 0.445ha for the purpose of this report. The additional site was treated as on-site in the Biodiversity Metric.

Modified grassland (g4)

- 4.6.3 The additional site was part of a horse grazed grassland field (Photos 17-18, Figure 3). Grasses were dominant with species including perennial rye grass, red fescue, Yorkshire fog, creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). Forb species included red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), dandelion, creeping buttercup, geranium species (*Geranium* sp.) and common mouse ear (*Cerastium fontanum*). Other species recorded at a low density included meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*).

Botanical quadrat surveys undertaken across a transect identified between 6-8 species present per 1m².

- 4.6.4 This area was therefore categorised as modified grassland for the purposes of the Biodiversity Metric, and a total of 0.445ha was inputted into the Biodiversity Metric. A condition assessment recorded a moderate condition.



Photo 17. Modified grassland in the additional site. View to the north-west.



Photo 18. Modified grassland in the additional site. View to the south-east

4.7 Protected and notable species

Amphibians

- 4.7.1 The data search identified no EPS mitigation licenses for great crested newt within 2km of the site. However, four survey license returns with a positive occurrence of GCN were located 640m to the west of the site.
- 4.7.2 The habitats within both sites were considered to provide opportunities for amphibian species during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle. The grassland provided potential foraging habitat.
- 4.7.3 A review of the maps available on the MAGIC website identified one waterbody within 250m of the development site. The pond was not considered to have connectivity to the site given that it was located across a road, as well as across several pasture fields which were likely to act as a barrier to dispersal. No waterbodies were present within 250m of the additional site.
- 4.7.4 Given that no suitable waterbodies were identified within proximity to the site, it was considered that amphibians were likely absent from the site. As such, amphibians were not considered further in this report.

Badger

- 4.7.5 [REDACTED]

Bats

- 4.7.6 One EPS mitigation license was identified within 2km of the site for brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and lesser horseshoe bat roosts.
- 4.7.7 No habitat features suitable for roosting bats were identified within the site.
- 4.7.8 The habitats within both sites were considered to have low potential to support foraging bats. The grassland has the potential to provide foraging opportunities by supporting populations of invertebrate prey. However, the grasslands were species poor and unlikely to provide a significant foraging resource in context with the local landscape. No linear features suitable for commuting were present within the development site boundary. A hedgerow bounded the western perimeter of the additional site which provided a short length of suitable commuting habitat.

Birds

- 4.7.9 Any incidental observations of birds were recorded during the initial PEA survey but it was not the main focus of the survey. Species observed included jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), carrion crow (*Corvus corone*), chaffinch (*Phylloscopus collybita*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) and magpie (*Pica pica*).
- 4.7.10 The long-sward grassland within both sites provided an area suitable for ground nesting birds. No additional features suitable for nesting birds were identified within both sites.

Hazel dormouse

- 4.7.11 The data search identified no EPS mitigation licenses for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) within 2km of the site.
- 4.7.12 No habitat suitable for hazel dormouse was present within either of the sites. Therefore, hazel dormouse were not considered further within this report.

Invertebrates

- 4.7.13 The habitats recorded within both sites were considered likely to support a common assemblage of invertebrate species in context with the local area.

Reptiles

- 4.7.14 The habitats within both sites were considered to have low suitability for common reptile species. The grassland habitat provided potential foraging habitat, although this was considered to be suboptimal given the lack of cover.

Other species

- 4.7.15 The site was considered suitable to support other common and widespread species with suitable foraging habitat for hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*).

5.0 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

5.1 Summary of current and proposed land use

- 5.1.1 The development site is considered to support modified grassland (Figure 2). Proposals include the creation of a horse arena on the development site comprising a carpet fibre surface (Table 5, Figure 4).
- 5.1.2 The additional site is considered to support modified grassland (Figure 3). Proposals include grassland enhancement and tree planting in order to meet the required Biodiversity Net Gain (Table 6, Figure 5).

Development site

Table 5. Summary of proposed changes to the development site.

Area/ length	UKHAB classification	Metric classification	Condition	Proposed changes
Existing habitats lost, retained or enhanced (Figure 2)				
0.485ha	Modified grassland (g4)	Modified grassland	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Loss</u> of all habitat.
Proposed habitat creation (Figure 4)				
0.485ha	Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (u1c)	Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface	<u>N/A</u>	Horse arena to be <u>created</u> .

Additional site

Table 6. Summary of proposed changes to the additional site.

Area/ length	UKHAB classification	Metric classification	Condition	Proposed changes
Existing habitats lost, retained or enhanced (Figures 3 and 5)				
0.445ha	Modified grassland (g4)	Modified grassland	<u>Moderate</u>	All habitat to be <u>enhanced</u> to moderate condition other neutral grassland.
Proposed habitat creation (Figure 5)				
0.0407ha	Scattered trees (32)	Individual trees, rural trees	<u>Moderate</u>	10x small rural trees to be <u>created</u> .

5.2 Biodiversity Net Gain calculation

- 5.2.1 The data from the proposed land use changes indicated above were inputted into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. The calculation determined that if the proposed habitat changes within Tables 5 and 6, and Figures 4 and 5 are undertaken, a total Biodiversity Net Gain of 0.40 in habitat units (14.58% net gain) can be achieved (Appendix B).

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Designated sites

- 6.1.1 It is considered that the proposed development is located sufficiently far away from statutory and non-statutory designated sites to avoid any direct impacts during the proposed works. In addition, the proposed development is not predicted to increase footfall to any designated sites.
- 6.1.2 No new lighting is proposed and therefore no negative impacts on horseshoe bats associated with the Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC are anticipated as a result of light spill. The loss of small areas of modified grassland is considered to have a negligible impact on bats given that those habitats are species-poor and likely to be of low value to bats. The loss of a small area of modified grassland will be offset by grassland enhancement and tree planting within the additional site which will provide an overall enhancement for foraging bats in the local landscape, including horseshoe bats.

6.2 Habitats

- 6.2.1 The proposed development will result in the net loss of a small area of grassland. This habitat is of low value given the poor diversity of floral species present and is considered to be easy to recreate. As such, the loss of this habitat is considered to have a minor negative impact at the site level only.
- 6.2.2 The proposed habitat creation and enhancements include enhancing the moderate condition modified grassland in the additional site to moderate condition other neutral grassland and planting ten new rural trees. This is considered to provide an overall enhancement to the site and have a positive impact at the local level.

6.3 Protected and notable species

Badger

- 6.3.1 No direct evidence attributable to badger was identified within either of the sites, however the habitats are suitable for foraging badgers and sett creation. There is the potential for badger to create a new sett prior to the proposed works, and there is a potential for badger to enter the site overnight. As such, suitable mitigation measures should be implemented to ensure there is no direct harm to badger during the proposed works.

Bats

- 6.3.2 Both sites have low potential to support foraging bats. The loss of small areas of modified grassland is considered to have a negligible impact on bats given that those habitats are species-poor and likely to be of low value to bats. Other habitats of potential value to foraging bats will be retained and enhanced within the additional site. As such, it is considered that overall, there will be no negative impacts to foraging bats.
- 6.3.3 No new lighting is proposed and so no negative impacts on bats are anticipated as a result of light spill.

Birds

- 6.3.4 Both sites are suitable for ground nesting bird species. If long-sward grassland is allowed to develop, the proposed works have the potential to destroy active bird nests (if present at the time of works).
- 6.3.5 If suitable mitigation measures are implemented to ensure that no active bird nests are impacted by the proposed works, and compensatory nesting and roosting habitat is provided, it is considered unlikely that the proposed development would have a negative impact on birds.

Invertebrates

- 6.3.6 The loss of small areas of modified grassland within the development site will result in the loss of a small area of suitable habitat for invertebrates. The loss of modified grassland will be offset by grassland enhancement and tree planting within the additional site which will provide an overall enhancement for invertebrates. As such, the assemblage of invertebrates supported across both sites is not expected to change significantly as a result of the proposed development.

Reptiles

- 6.3.7 Both sites are considered to offer low suitability habitat for foraging common reptile species. Given the small area of habitat to be removed in context with the local landscape and opportunities directly adjacent to the site for reptiles, it was considered that undertaking reptile surveys would be disproportionate to the scale of impact. As such, in lieu of confirming absence within the site by undertaking further surveys, a suitable precautionary method statement should be implemented to protect reptiles during the proposed works. As such, providing that suitable precautionary methods are adhered to, no negative impacts to reptiles are predicted.

Other species

- 6.3.8 Both sites are considered to be suitable for hedgehog and brown hare. As such, precautionary measures should be adopted during the proposed works to avoid any direct harm to species. In addition, any new fencing should be made permeable to hedgehogs (and other animals).

6.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.4.1 The results of the Biodiversity Metric calculation determines that the proposed development can deliver a total Biodiversity Net Gain of 0.40 habitat units (14.58% net gain). This is more than the standard target of 10% and is considered to be appropriate for the size and type of development.
- 6.4.2 To achieve Biodiversity Net Gain, a suitable Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will be required to ensure that the new habitats establish correctly and meet the required target conditions.

6.4.3 When using the data provided in this report, it is important to note:

- The measures of area and lengths were approximate only and mapped from aerial photography using QGIS software;
- The three types of Biodiversity Units (habitat, hedges, and rivers) are unique and cannot be summed, traded, or converted. They cannot be summed to give an overall Biodiversity Unit value;
- The Biodiversity Metric uses habitats as a proxy for biodiversity. Although this is a rational means of measuring biodiversity value, it is a simplification of the 'real world'. The metric and its outputs should therefore be interpreted with care, and with wider ecological advice;
- Biodiversity Unit values generated by the Biodiversity Metric cannot be compared to unit outputs from other metric versions; and
- The good practice principles should be understood and followed (Appendix C).

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Habitats

- 7.1.1 The retained habitats close to the works area should be protected during the proposed works. No machinery should be tracked, and no materials should be stored, immediately adjacent to hedgerows or trees. Pollution prevention measures should be adopted to ensure no toxic substances are spilt onto the retained habitats.

7.2 Protected and notable species

Badger

- 7.2.1 A site walkover should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist in the 48-hour period prior to the start of the proposed works to determine any new badger activity within the site.
- 7.2.2 As a precautionary measure during the proposed works, at night any excavations should be fitted with ramps to ensure badgers or other animals do not become trapped. In addition, works should be undertaken during daylight hours only.

Birds

- 7.2.3 It is recommended that grassland in the development site is kept at a short-sward (below 20cm) prior to the proposed works, preferably with management starting outside of the nesting bird period (see below). If short sward grassland is present, no further survey or mitigation is necessary in regard to nesting birds.
- 7.2.4 If grass sward length exceeds 20cm, works should avoid the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). If this cannot be avoided, a nesting bird survey should be undertaken in the 24-hour period prior to the removal of grassland. The survey should take place in suitable weather conditions and between sunrise and 10:00 or between 15:00 and sunset. The survey should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist and adhere to the following protocol:
- The long-sward grassland should be observed for a minimum of 30 minutes for evidence of nesting bird behaviour from a discrete vantage point;
 - If no evidence of nesting bird behaviour is observed, an inspection survey should be undertaken to ensure there are no active nests present. If full access is not possible, the initial observation period should be extended to 60 minutes;
 - If there are no signs of nesting activity, the proposed works should commence within the 24 hour period following the nesting bird survey; and
 - If the initial observation and inspection is inconclusive, a phased removal approach should be adopted as advised by the ecologist.
- 7.2.5 If an active nest is discovered, the nest should remain undisturbed by a buffer of at least 5m until the young have fledged.
- 7.2.6 The grassland within the additional site should be managed such that long-sward grassland suitable for ground nesting birds can develop during the nesting bird season.

Reptiles

- 7.2.7 The following precautionary method statement with measures to protect reptiles from direct harm during the proposed development should be followed during the proposed works:
- No timing restrictions are considered necessary; however it is recommended that works are undertaken in suitable conditions for reptiles to be active i.e. daylight hours and temperatures above 10°C;
 - If vegetation exceeds 150mm in height, sensitive vegetation clearance using hand tools should be undertaken in two phases. Initially the vegetation should be cut to 100mm tall, raked by hand to remove arisings, and left for a minimum period of 24 hours. After, the vegetation should be cut to ground level and maintained as such to reduce suitability for reptiles;
 - Vegetation should be cut in one direction and towards retained habitat to allow any reptiles to move to safety; and
 - Materials and waste should be stored on pallets or within skips to prevent them from being used by reptiles during the proposed works.
- 7.2.8 An ecologist should be contacted in the unlikely event that reptiles are found during the proposed works.

Other species

- 7.2.9 The precautionary methods detailed within sections 7.2.1-7.2.7 should be adhered to during works to protect hedgehog and brown hare from direct harm during the works.

7.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 7.3.1 A long-term Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be devised by an ecologist in order to ensure the retained, enhanced, and new habitats are managed appropriately. The HMMP should detail how the habitats will reach the target conditions for Biodiversity Net Gain. Furthermore, it should include ongoing management costs, monitoring of progress, and the facility to adapt management if necessary.
- 7.3.2 The HMMP should include details on grassland enhancement and management. This should include overseeding the grassland with a green hay or a suitable wildflower seed mix of local provenance.
- 7.3.3 The HMMP should include details on the planting and management of 10 new scattered trees. Trees should be of native species and of local stock wherever possible.

7.4 Survey updates

- 7.4.1 This report is valid for 18 months from the date of the survey. Further advice from an ecologist should be sought if the scope of the proposed works changes, or if the works are delayed by more than 18 months.

8.0 References

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- 8.1.2 ARG UK (2010) *ARG UK Advice Note 5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index*. ARG UK, London.
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- 8.1.15 Natural England (2022). *Standing Advice Species Sheet: Badgers: advice for making planning decisions*. Natural England, York.
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- 8.1.17 Natural England (2022). *Standing Advice Species Sheet: Invertebrates: advice for making planning decisions*. Natural England, York.
- 8.1.18 Natural England (2022). *Standing Advice Species Sheet: Reptiles: advice for making planning decisions*. Natural England, York.
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- 8.1.21 UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <http://www.ukhab.org/>).

8.2 Websites

- 8.2.1 earth.google.com
- 8.2.2 www.magic.defra.gov.uk
- 8.2.3 www.designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk

9.0 Figures

Figure 1	Site location plan (p. 32)
Figure 2	Baseline habitats plan – Development site (p. 33)
Figure 3	Baseline habitats plan – Additional site (p. 34)
Figure 4	Proposed habitats plan – Development site (p. 35)
Figure 5	Proposed habitats plan – Additional site (p. 36)



REFERENCE

Figure 1

TITLE

Site location plan

LEGEND

-  Development site
-  Additional site location

DRAWING INFORMATION

Project: Ivy Farm, West Yatton,

Project reference: P138

Date drawn: 13/11/2025

Drawn by: Joseph Wilkie

Scale: 1: 25000 @ A4

Version: 1.0

Notes: Locations and distances are approximate only. Base map provided by Google Maps.



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REFERENCE

Figure 2

TITLE

Baseline habitats plan -
Development site

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Modified grassland

DRAWING INFORMATION

Project: Ivy Farm, West Yatton

Project reference: P138

Date drawn: 13/11/2025

Drawn by: Joseph Wilkie

Version: 1.0

Scale: 1:700 @ A4

Notes: Locations, distances and
scale are approximate only. Base
map provided by Google Maps.



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REFERENCE

Figure 3

TITLE

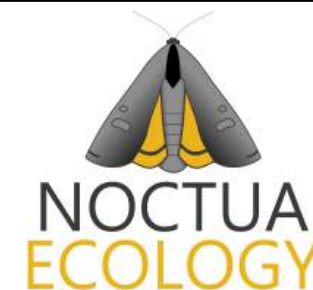
Baseline habitats plan -
Additional site

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Modified grassland

DRAWING INFORMATION

Project: Ivy Farm, West Yatton
Project reference: P138
Date drawn: 13/11/2025
Drawn by: Joseph Wilkie
Version: 1.0
Scale: 1:700 @ A4
Notes: Locations, distances and
scale are approximate only. Base
map provided by Google Maps.



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REFERENCE

Figure 4

TITLE

Proposed habitats plan -
Development site

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Artificial unvegetated,
unsealed surface

DRAWING INFORMATION

Project: Ivy Farm, West Yatton

Project reference: P138

Date drawn: 13/11/2025

Drawn by: Joseph Wilkie

Version: 1.0

Scale: 1:700 @ A4

Notes: Locations, distances and
scale are approximate only. Base
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REFERENCE

Figure 5

TITLE

Proposed habitats plan -
Additional site

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Other neutral grassland
-  Rural tree - small

DRAWING INFORMATION

Project: Ivy Farm, West Yatton

Project reference: P138

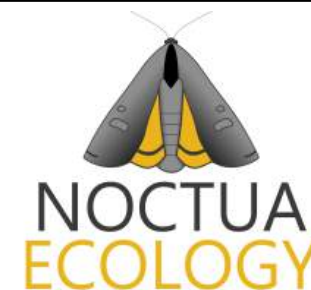
Date drawn: 13/11/2025

Drawn by: Joseph Wilkie

Version: 1.0

Scale: 1:700 @ A4

Notes: Locations, distances and
scale are approximate only. Base
map provided by Google Maps.



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Appendix A. Biodiversity Net Gain Condition Assessments

Modified grassland (g4)

Table 7. Condition assessment of the modified grassland located across the site.

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
Criterion		Outcome	
		Development site	Additional site
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	Fail	Pass
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Pass	Pass
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area.	Pass	Pass
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area.	Pass	Fail
E	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 10%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	Fail	Fail
F	Cover of bracken less than 20%.	Pass	Pass
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Pass	Pass
Condition assessment score		Poor	Moderate

Appendix B. Statutory Biodiversity Metric Headline Results

Land at Ivy Farm, West Yatton

Return to results menu

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ▲

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	2.75	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	3.15	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.40	14.58%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.40	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.40	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	14.58%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	2.75	3.03	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Appendix C. Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles

Principle 1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy. Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision-makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.

Principle 2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere. Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity - these impacts cannot be offset to achieve No Net Loss or Net Gain.

Principle 3. Be inclusive and equitable. Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to Net Gain. Achieve Net Gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible, and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.

Principle 4. Address risks Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving Net Gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.

Principle 5. Make a measurable Net Gain contribution. Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.

Principle 6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly-justified choices when:

- Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses

- Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation
- Achieving Net Gain locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels

- Enhancing existing or creating new habitat
- Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity.

Principle 7. Be additional. Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).

Principle 8. Create a Net Gain legacy. Ensure Net Gain generates long-term benefits by:

- Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure Net Gain in perpetuity
- Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management
- Designing Net Gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change
- Mitigating risks from other land uses
- Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another
- Supporting local-level management of Net Gain activities.

Principle 9. Optimise sustainability. Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.

Principle 10. Be transparent. Communicate all Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

From <https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development/>