
CATTLE BUILDING AT WHYR FARM, WORTON, WILTSHIRE

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT

On behalf of

MR J BODMAN

Final Report

10th November 2025

Prepared by



MALFORD
Environmental Consulting

www.malfordenvironmentalconsulting.co.uk

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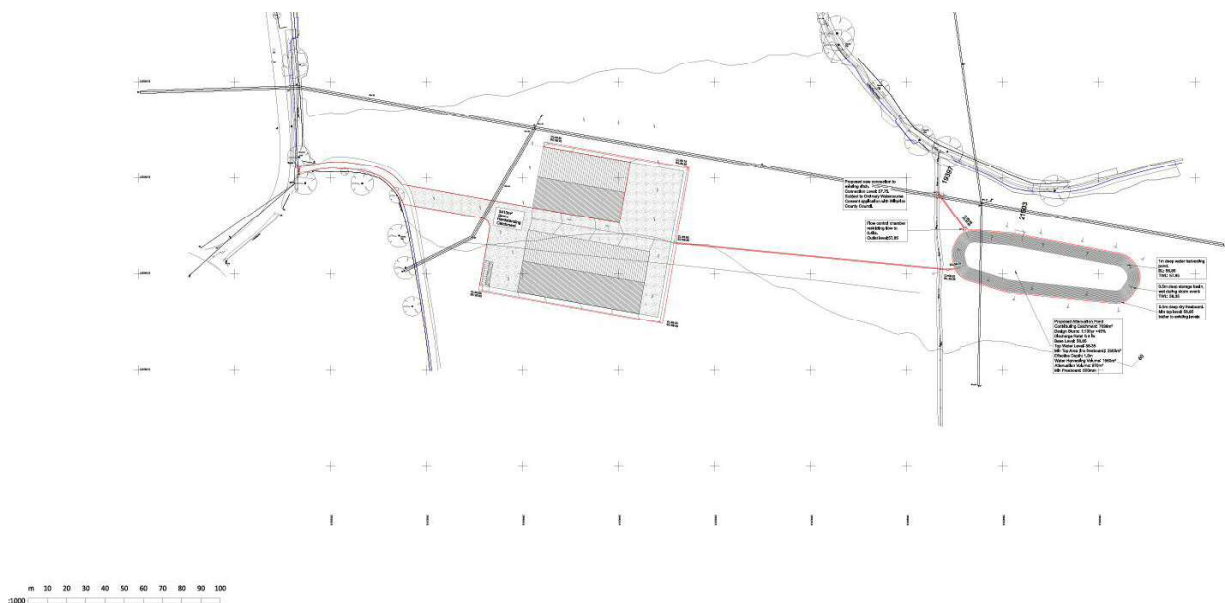
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The client is submitting a planning application to Wiltshire Council to construct a cattle shed with associated hard-standing and surface water storage basin. Site accommodation is also to be provided. The new development will be located within farmland at Whyr Farm, Worton, Wiltshire see Figure 1. The new building will be accessed and served via an existing hard-standing vehicle farm track.

Figure 1 Location of Cattle Building Development



1.2 Scope of work and experience

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric calculation and this BNG Report has been produced as part of the planning application submission documentation, as required by The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024.

To inform the BNG calculations, a habitat survey of the land within the red line application site has been undertaken using UKHabs methodology, which identifies, categorises and quantifies baseline habitats affected by the proposed development.

The baseline habitat data and proposed development plan have been used to populate the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool V1.0.4 to run a BNG calculation (version of the Metric accompanying this report).

The BNG assessment has been completed by Dr Stephen Dangerfield who has 30 years' experience. Stephen is a Chartered Environmentalist and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

2 Methodology

2.1 Field survey

A habitat survey of the proposed development site was undertaken on 16th and 29th October 2025. The survey determined habitat type(s) according to UK Habitats Classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023) as well as extent and condition (Natural England, 2024). Botanical species within each habitat type were recorded where appropriate. BNG habitat condition assessments of relevant baseline and future habitats are provided.

2.2 Study limitations

There are no limitations for the survey – the survey area was accessible and weather conditions were good (dry, 11-13°C, 90-100% cloud and BS1).

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

2.3.1 Approach

The Environment Act 2021 covers targets, plans and policies for, *inter alia*, 'improving the natural environment' and 'nature and biodiversity'. The Act brings in new requirements in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

The Environment Act establishes the precedent for achieving a biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission and establishes that a biodiversity gain is met if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat by at least 10%. Furthermore, any habitat enhancement must be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed.

Site habitat losses/gains have been calculated based on a comparison of baseline habitat and the proposed scheme layout habitat.

The baseline habitat survey data and proposed development plans have been used to quantify area (ha) to populate the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric, which is used to calculate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in terms of habitat unit gains or deficits. Data are used to create BNG baseline and proposed plans (see Appendix A). Habitat condition assessments of relevant baseline or future habitats have been provided (see Appendix B).

The means by which BNG can be demonstrated is set out in the following guidance and resources. These have been used to inform the BNG assessment and overall approach set out in this report.

- ❖ CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development.
- ❖ CIEEM (2021) Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates.
- ❖ British Standard (2021) BS 8683:2021 Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain – Specification.
- ❖ Defra (2024) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - including the Technical Supplement, User Guide, Calculation Tool and Habitat Condition Sheets.
- ❖ The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024.
- ❖ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0.

The BNG User Guide (Defra, February 2024) identifies limitations of the biodiversity metric defined as principles that inform the use of the biodiversity metric tool, including:

- ❖ Principle 1: The metric assessment should be completed by a competent person.
- ❖ Principle 2: The use of the biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirements. This includes consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands.
- ❖ Principle 3: The biodiversity metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidance and professional codes.
- ❖ Principle 4: The biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice.
- ❖ Principle 5: Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values.
- ❖ Principle 6: The biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance.
- ❖ Principle 7: Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe.
- ❖ Principle 8: Created and enhanced habitats should be, where practical and reasonable, local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation.
- ❖ Principle 9: The biodiversity metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. Proposals should aim to:
 - maintain habitat extent - supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks.
 - ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function.

2.3.2 BNG trading rules

The BNG trading rules are set out in the table below (extract from Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide, Natural England, 2024). These 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.

Baseline habitat distinctiveness band	Area module (area units)	Hedgerow module (hedgerow units)	Watercourse module (watercourse units)
Very High	Priority should be given to replacing losses with area habitat units of the same habitat type (see below notes on trading)	Losses must be replaced with hedgerow units of the same habitat type	Priority should be given to replacing losses with watercourse units of the same habitat type (see below notes on trading)

Baseline habitat distinctiveness band	Area module (area units)	Hedgerow module (hedgerow units)	Watercourse module (watercourse units)
High	Losses must be replaced with area habitat units of the same habitat type	Losses must be replaced with hedgerow units of the same habitat type or of a higher band	Losses must be replaced with watercourse units of the same habitat type
Medium	Losses must be replaced by area habitat units of medium band habitats within the same broad habitat type	Losses must be replaced with hedgerow units of the same band	Losses must be replaced with watercourse units of the same habitat type
Low	Losses must be replaced with area habitat units of the same or higher band	Losses must be replaced with hedgerow units of the same or of a higher band	Losses must be replaced with watercourse units of a higher band
Very low	Trading rules do not apply	Losses must be replaced with hedgerow units of the same or of a higher band	Not applicable

3 Existing Habitats

3.1 Temporary grass and clover ley

The majority of land that the new building and associated access / hard-standing and water storage basin is located within is cropland: temporary grass and clover ley, which comprises rye grass (*Lolium* sp) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*). This habitat covers 0.4633 ha within the application site.

Temporary Grass and Clover Ley does not require a Habitat Condition to be set.



Rye ley grass in location of proposed building (top), storage basin (bottom left) and close-up of crop (bottom right) in the application site

3.2 Non-cereal crop

The remaining land that the new building and associated access / hard-standing is located within is cropland: non-cereal crop. This habitat covers 0.2608 ha within the application site.

Non-Cereal Crop does not require a Habitat Condition to be set.



Non-cereal crop planted within the southern part of the application site

3.3 Modified grass

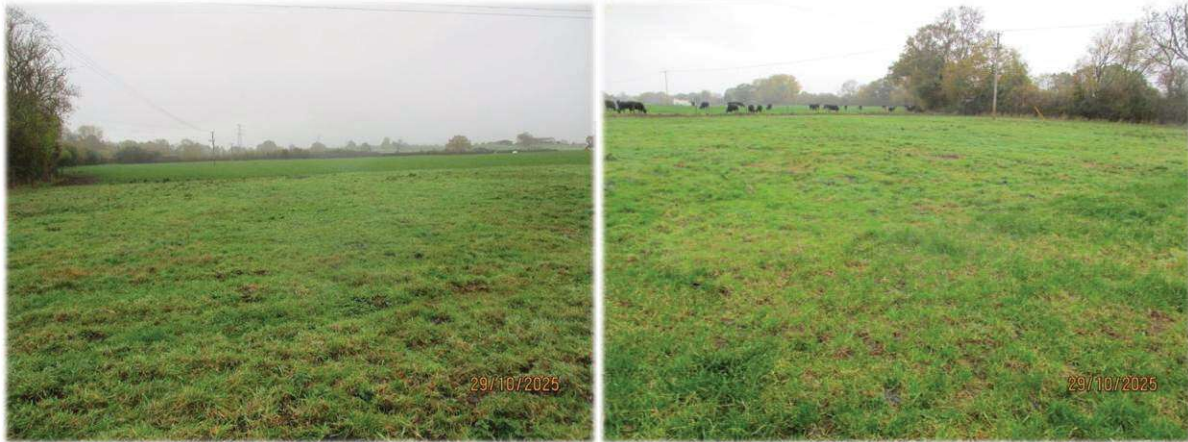
Part of the proposed water storage basin sits within part of a small area of longer established grassland pasture, which covers 0.1453 ha within the application site.

This grassland is dominated by a few common agricultural grasses including rye grass (*Lolium* sp), rough meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*) and cock's-foot (*Dactylus glomerata*). Forbs are dominated by white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) with smaller amounts of sow thistle (*Sonchus* sp), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), dissected-leaved crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*) and soft rush (*Juncus effusus*).

The average number of plants per m² is less than six as shown below based on the average number of plants recorded in five random 1m² quadrats selected within the development site.

Plants	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Rye grass	X	X	X	X	X
Rough meadow-grass	X	X	X	X	X
Cock's-foot	X	X	X	X	X
White clover	X	X	X	X	X
Creeping buttercup	X	X	X	X	X
Creeping thistle		X		X	
Total number	5	6	5	6	5
Average number	5.4				

The Modified Grassland has a Habitat Condition of Poor (see Appendix B).



Modified grassland within which part of the proposed water storage basin will be located within the application site

3.4 Artificial land, unsealed surface

The existing access road is surfaced with compacted stone/clinker, which covers 0.0244 ha within the application site.

Artificial Unsealed land does not require a Habitat Condition to be set.



Artificial unsealed land forming the existing farm access road

3.5 Ditch

The overflow of the new water storage basin will be piped to an existing 'ditch'. In reality, this is not a ditch but instead is a shallow (ca. 25cm deep) linear depression located within and forming part of the cropland, which at the time of the survey comprises bare earth / mud being poached by cattle, see photos below.



Furthermore, if it is deemed that the cropland depression is a 'ditch' for the purposes of BNG, it is considered that the *de minimis* exemption applies to this feature, in as much that:

- ❖ The proposed development does not impact a priority river habitat.
- ❖ The proposed development impacts < 5m length of ditch habitat (a single pipe will connect into the ditch);
- ❖ The proposed development does not impact > 25m² of ditch bank top habitat (the pipe is buried and the storage basin is 5+m away).

Based on this guidance, it is concluded that the proposed development qualifies for 'watercourse (ditch)' exemption under the *de minimis* rule.

4 Proposed Habitats

4.1 Developed land, sealed surface

The proposed cattle shed, accommodation unit and the small flow control chamber of the water storage basin will cover 0.2055 ha.

Developed Sealed land does not require a Habitat Condition to be set.

4.2 Artificial land, unsealed surface

The proposed new vehicle access and the stone hard-standing surrounding the building will cover 0.3317 ha.

The existing vehicle farm access is retained and will continue to cover 0.0244 ha.

Artificial Unsealed land does not require a Habitat Condition to be set.

4.3 Other neutral grassland

The proposed new water storage basin will be constructed with a flat bottom and shallow sides and will remain dry for most of the growing season (spring / summer) while being used to collect / store surface water runoff during the wetter late autumn and winter months. The existing nutrient rich agricultural topsoil will be stripped off to form the basin. The basin will be enclosed within stock-proof fencing preventing cattle from accessing the basin once operational.

The basin will cover 0.2543 ha, which will be established as floristically-rich, wildflower grassland [UK Habitat: Other Neutral Grassland], which will be managed to achieve a 'good' condition, which is set with a standard target timescale of 10 years.

The wildflower grassland within the basin will be established using an appropriate wildflower seed mix obtained from a reputable seed house. Naturescape N7 (Wetland Meadow Mixture) or equivalent will be used, which is suitable for seasonally inundated / damp meadows. N7 contains 22 flower species and 12 grass species as shown in Appendix C.

The seed mix includes the seed of yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), an annual root-hemi-parasite often present in moderate to low fertility grassland and which helps to suppress more vigorous grass species.

The newly profiled basin will be prepared by raking the soil to create a fine tilth. Seeds will be sown at the rate specified by the supplier. The N7 grassland seed mix will be sown preferably in the autumn (August-September) or alternatively in spring (March-April).

The wildflower grassland will be managed with an annual cut, similar to a traditional hay cutting regime, where the grass is left uncut from spring through to late summer (i.e. August). This gives the grass and forb species within the other neutral grassland an opportunity to flower and set seed. After flowering, a cut will be taken in August lowering the sward height to about 50mm.

The grass cuttings will be left *in situ* to dry and being turned at least once to allow plants to shed seed (up to 7 days depending on weather).

The grass cuttings will be collected and removed from the basin grassland to avoid a build-up of nutrients that would favour more competitive, vigorous and undesirable plants such as vigorous grasses and ruderal plants (e.g. nettles, thistles and docks).

Thereafter re-growth of the grass sward can be kept at a height of about 50mm by regular cutting, which should continue until late autumn (e.g. end of October or early November).

Some weed control within the grassland may need to be implemented when required, which could involve hand pulling of self-set, young woody / scrubby species as well as the targeted use of herbicide for nettles/docks/thistles or other invasive or undesirable species which could appear.

The applicant will be responsible for the creation, aftercare and long-term management of the other neutral grassland within the storage basin.

The creation of 'good condition' Other Neutral Grassland is considered viable and achievable with the implementation of appropriate habitat management and monitoring thus achieving the required target habitat condition criteria as set out in Appendix B within the standard timeframe of 10 years.

4.4 Temporary grass and clover ley

The surface water drainage pipes will be buried and therefore land above the pipes will be returned to the existing habitat (retained baseline habitat). Land above the drainage pipes around the north of the building and connecting to the water storage basin will therefore be retained as cropland: temporary grass and clover ley. This habitat covers 0.0406 ha within the application site.

Temporary Grass and Clover Ley does not require a Habitat Condition to be set.

4.5 Non-cereal crop

The surface water drainage pipes will be buried and therefore land above the pipes will be returned to the existing habitat (retained baseline habitat). Land above the drainage pipes around the south of the building will therefore be retained as cropland: non-cereal crop. This habitat covers 0.0366 ha within the application site.

Non-Cereal Crop does not require a Habitat Condition to be set.

5 Habitat Change Summary

The calculated changes in baseline and proposed habitats are summarised in the table below.

Existing habitats			Proposed habitats		
Type	Size (ha)	Condition	Type	Size (ha)	Condition
Temporary grass and clover ley	0.4633	n/a	Temporary grass and clover ley	0.0406	n/a
Non-cereal crop	0.2608	n/a	Non-cereal crop	0.0366	n/a
Modified grass	0.1453	Poor	Modified grass	0.0007	n/a
Other neutral grass	0	n/a	Other neutral grass	0.2543	Good
Developed, sealed	0	n/a	Developed, sealed	0.2055	n/a
Artificial, unsealed	0.0244	n/a	Artificial, unsealed	0.3561	n/a
TOTAL	0.8938			0.8938	

6 Wildlife

6.1 Constraints

The study area encompasses three main habitat types, which are: temporary grass and clover ley; non-cereal crop; and modified grassland in poor condition with very restricted botanical diversity. No structures, trees, shrubs or hedge are within or affected by the proposed development. The new building / accommodation unit will be accessed / served by an existing compacted stone (artificial, unsealed) vehicle farm track.

There are no protected species issues associated with this proposed development. Roosting bats are not present and the habitats affected have negligible value for foraging bats. There is no badger sett within or adjacent to the development site and no signs of badger foraging were observed. No other protected mammals are present within or adjacent to the application site. More common / widespread mammals, such as deer or fox, could pass through the development site.

The application site is generally unsuitable for ground nesting birds, with overhead cables crossing the application site that provide perches for birds of prey, but there is a very low chance of ground nesting birds being present at certain times (depending of land use / crop type etc). No other vegetation that could support nesting birds is affected by the proposed development.

The habitats within the application site are unsuitable for supporting reptiles or great crested newt / amphibians being arable / cropland or a small area of low diversity pasture with a low open sward.

6.2 Impacts and mitigation

6.2.1 Common mammals

Construction of the new cattle building, accommodation unit, hard-standing, access and water storage basin, which will all involve creation of small excavations and laying of pipes, has the potential to injure / cause mortality to common mammals if undertaken without appropriate safeguards during the construction phase, which is a *negative impact* in a *Local (site)* context.

To ensure protection of common mammals that may traverse the site during the construction phase the following actions will be implemented:

- ❖ Any excavations that need to be left overnight will be covered, appropriately profiled or fitted with a ramp to ensure that any animals that enter the hole can safely escape.
- ❖ Any open pipework with an outside diameter of greater than 120 mm will be covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals entering/becoming trapped.
- ❖ Any excavations or pipes left overnight will be inspected last thing in the working day and first thing the next morning, and if an animal is found an appropriately qualified person should be contacted to agree appropriate action.

6.2.2 Ground nesting birds

Topsoil stripping or re-profiling of the agricultural / arable land to facilitate the proposed development has very low potential to destroy or harm ground nesting species if implemented without appropriate safeguards. If this were to happen this is a negative impact in a Local (site) context.

Topsoil stripping or land re-profiling undertaken outside the bird nesting season (i.e. undertaken during the months of September through to February inclusive) will not require a pre-works ecological inspection.

However, it is recommended that although there is only a low potential for ground nesting birds to be present that a pre-works inspection is carried out by a qualified ecologist / ornithologist in advance of any topsoil stripping or land re-profiling undertaken in the bird nesting season (i.e. undertaken during the months of March through to August inclusive).

Survey findings would define appropriate mitigation, which could include re-scheduling work or setting up an exclusion area whilst holding a watching brief on the area to establish when the nest site is clear.

7 BNG Assessment

The Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric V1.0.4 has been used to quantify 'habitat' losses/gains based on information from the baseline habitat survey and the proposed scheme design (see Sections 3, 4 and 5).

Baseline habitat = 1.74 units

Proposed habitat = 2.29 units

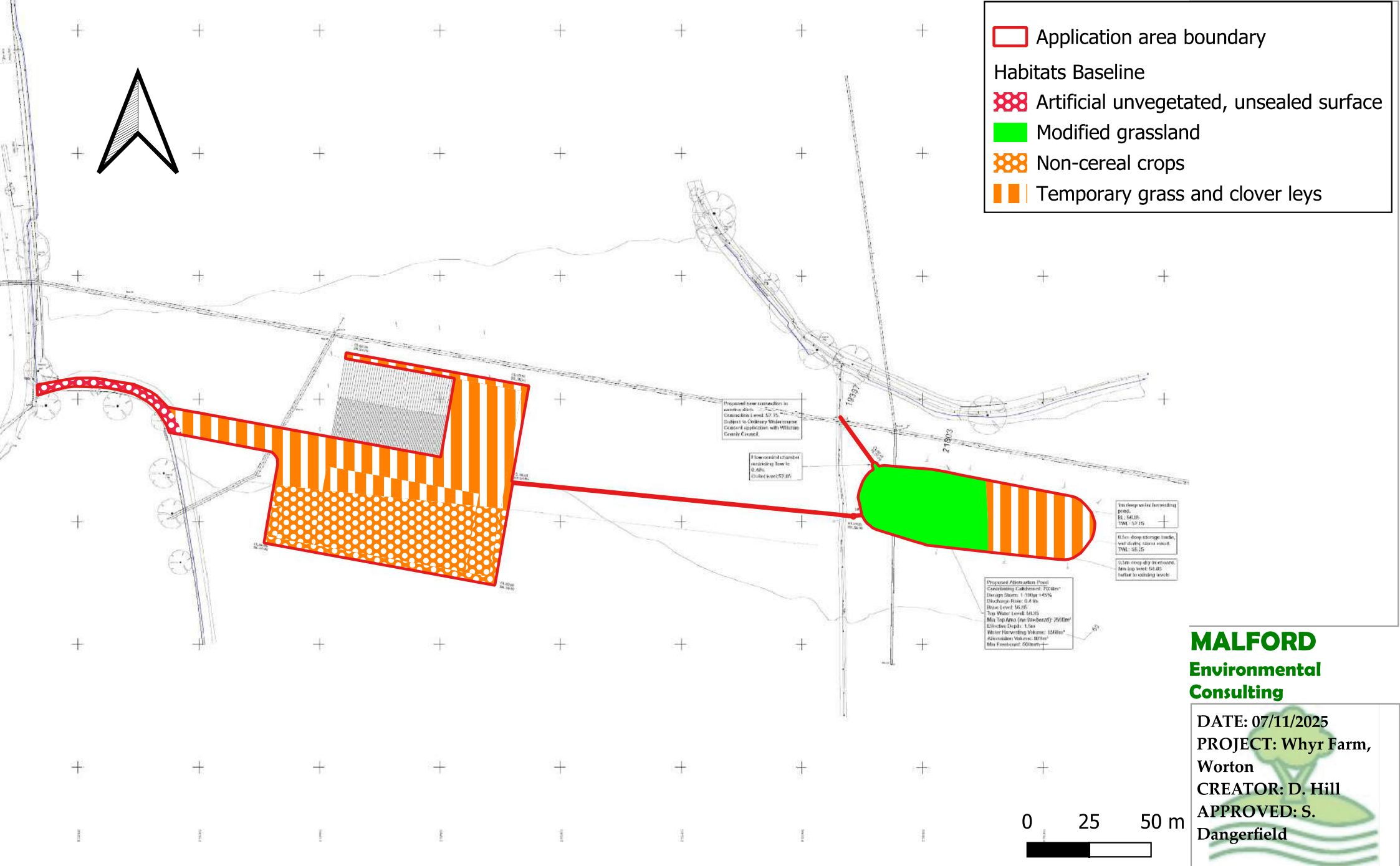
Therefore, for this proposed development the calculated habitat gains are:

- ❖ Total habitat net unit change = + 0.55 units
- ❖ Total net percentage change = **+ 31.86 %**

The proposed development, which includes species-rich (wildflower) grassland creation and management, therefore provides a biodiversity gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 (BNG targets met and biodiversity trading rules have been satisfied).

The applicant will be responsible for the creation and management of the grassland habitat that forms part of the Biodiversity Net Gain requirement, which will be secured as part of the planning permission.

Appendix A BNG Baseline and Proposed Plans



MALFORD
Environmental
Consulting

DATE: 07/11/2025
PROJECT: Whyr Farm,
Worton
CREATOR: D. Hill
APPROVED: S.
Dangerfield

BNG Baseline Plan 2025

Malford Environmental

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MALFORD
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Consulting

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BNG Proposed Plan 2025

Appendix B BNG Habitat Conditions

Baseline Habitats

Modified Grassland

The existing Modified Grassland is classed as having a 'poor' condition as it achieves 5 criteria out of the total of 7 criteria (not red, which includes Criterion 1 required to achieve moderate or good condition), as set out below.

1. There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote).
2. 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.
3. 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).
4. 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.
5. Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).
6. Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.
7. There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).

Footnote: Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*).

Post-development Habitats

Other Neutral (Wildflower) Grassland

To achieve a 'good' condition status the future management of the wildflower grassland within the storage basin will aim to achieve all 6 criteria (including criterion 1 and 6) as listed below.

1. The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).

Note: this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.

2. 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.
3. Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.
4. Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) is less than 5%.
5. Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal conditions (see below) and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area.

If any invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.

6. There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including only forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type.

Note: this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.

Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type (do not contribute to components 1 and 6) include: creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*). There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site, as well as species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Appendix C Proposed Seed Mix for Other Neutral Grassland

Wetland Meadow Mixture (N7)

Flower species

Latin Name	English Name	Mix Composition
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	2.5%
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	9%
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	8%
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling	3%
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy	7%
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Birdsfoot Trefoil	4%
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil	4%
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged Robin	2%
<i>Ononis repens</i>	Common Restharrow	2%
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	4%
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip	3%
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self Heal	8%
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	9%
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow Rattle	10%
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	8%
<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>	Great Burnet	2%
<i>Serratula tinctoria</i>	Saw-wort	1%
<i>Stachys officinalis</i>	Betony	2.5%
<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	Devi's-bit Scabious	3.5%
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard	2%
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Wild Red Clover	3%
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch	3%

Grass species

<u>Latin Name</u>	<u>English Name</u>	<u>Mix Composition</u>
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	2.5%
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail	3%
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal Grass	2.5%
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking Grass	1.5%
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	16.5%
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hairgrass	2%
<i>Festuca Trachyphylla</i>	Hard Fescue	16.5%
<i>Festuca rubra</i> ssp. <i>commutata</i>	Chewing's Fescue	16%
<i>Festuca rubra</i> ssp. <i>litoralis</i>	Slender Creeping Red Fescue	29%
<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>	Meadow Barley	1%
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass	7.5%
<i>Trisetum flavescens</i>	Yellow Oatgrass	2%