

Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Leaffield Padel Courts

February 2026

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an assessment of the biodiversity change at an area of land known as Leaffield Industrial Estate, based on the proposals for the construction of three padel courts.

The baseline habitats include modified grassland, developed land; sealed surface, bramble scrub, mixed woodland and a native hedgerow with trees.

The development proposals will result in a gain of 10.63% for area habitats and 43.36% gain for hedgerows. The scheme does meet habitat trading requirements due to a gain of medium distinctiveness grassland and hedgerow improvement.

To secure this gain, they will need to be confirmed under a suitable worded planning condition.

CONTENTS

	Page(s)
1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 METHODOLOGY	6
3 BASELINE HABITATS	7
4 POST INTERVENTION HABITATS	13
5 SUMMARY OF ONSITE BIODIVERSITY CHANGE	17
6 REFERENCES	18
APPENDIX 1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	19

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an assessment of the biodiversity change following the proposals for an area of land known as Leafield Industrial Estate, Corsham, SN13 9SW, hereafter referred to as the 'site' and shown in Figure 1.
- 1.2 The site is located within the Local Planning Authority of Wiltshire Council and the Cotswolds National Character Area (NCA).
- 1.3 This report is submitted alongside the Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric and detailed plans of the baseline and proposed habitats.
- 1.4 The plans for the site comprise the creation of three padel courts.



Figure 1 Site location

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desktop Survey

- 2.1.1 The desktop survey included the identification of the relevant LPA and NCA, the presence of any priority or irreplaceable habitats on site using Natural England's habitat inventories, and a search for any relevant local plans/strategies which may inform the strategic significance of the habitats on site.

2.2 UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 2.2.1 The habitat survey was carried out on 23rd September 2025 according to the UKHab Classification system. The survey included a detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora.
- 2.2.2 Grassland and woodland habitats were surveyed using a systematic approach using quadrat samples. Examples of information collected within each grassland quadrat included aspect, slope, average ground cover, sward variation, species and their percentage cover. Examples of information collected within each woodland quadrat included presence of deadwood, presence of invasive species, presence of notable NVC communities and age distributions of vegetation.

3 BASELINE HABITATS

- 3.1.1 The site is 0.83 hectares in size. The baseline map, shown in Figure 2, displays the existing habitats onsite, and the habitats are described in relation to their BNG value below. Images and further descriptions of the habitats are provided in the associated Ecological Impact Assessment (Ethos Environmental Planning, 2026).
- 3.1.2 The desktop study did not identify any priority or irreplaceable habitats on site; this was confirmed during the UKHab survey. The site is not located within any strategic areas and, as such, all of the habitats within the assessment have been input as being of low strategic significance.



Figure 2 Baseline Habitats

3.2 Modified grassland (A1)

- 3.2.1 There is a parcel of modified grassland in the centre of the site. This habitat was assessed to be in a 'moderate' condition, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Modified grassland condition assessment

Criteria	Evidence
Condition	Moderate
Label	Modified grassland
There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in	Pass

Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	
Evidence	An average of 8 species per m ² were recorded.
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.	Pass
Evidence	Although regularly managed, the grassland is tussock-forming resulting in varied sward heights.
Some scattered scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat	Pass
Evidence	No scrub recorded.
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.	Fail
Evidence	The grassland supported dumped wood chippings and damage from vehicles.
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Fail
Evidence	Bare ground cover is just over 10%.
Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Pass
Evidence	No bracken recorded.
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).	Pass
Evidence	None recorded.
Number of Criteria Passed:	5

3.3 Mixed woodland (A2)

3.3.1 The mixed woodland along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site was assessed to be in a 'poor' condition, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 Woodland condition assessment with relevant scores highlighted in bold

Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator
1 Age distribution of trees	Three age classes present	Two age classes present	One age class present	2

2 Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland	3
3 Invasive plant species	No invasive species present in woodland	Rhododendron or laurel not present, other invasive species < 10% cover	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ≥10% cover.	3
4 Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	Three to four native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	None to two native tree or shrub species across woodland parcel	3
5 Cover of native tree and shrub species	> 80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native	50-80% of canopy trees and 50-80% of understory shrubs are native	< 50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native	2
6 Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted ⁷ .	21- 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space. But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category.	2
7 Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland; trees 4-7cm DBH, saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth	One or two classes only present in woodland	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland	1
8 Tree health	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low risk pest or disease present	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present	2
9 Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable NVC plant community at ground layer present	No recognisable NVC plant community at ground layer present	1

10 Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland	Two storeys across all survey plots	One or less storey across all survey plots	2
11 Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees per hectare	One veteran tree per hectare	No veteran trees present in woodland	1
12 Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/stems and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/stems and stumps or an abundance of small cavities	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/stems and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities	1
13 Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and/or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment and/or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground	1
Condition Assessment Result			Condition Assessment Score	
<i>Total score >32 (33 to 39)</i>			<i>Good (3)</i>	
<i>Total score 26 to 32</i>			<i>Moderate (2)</i>	
<i>Total score <26 (13 to 25)</i>			<i>Poor (1)</i>	

3.4 Bramble scrub (A3)

- 3.4.1 There is medium distinctiveness bramble scrub in the north of the site which does not require a condition assessment.

3.5 Developed land; sealed surface (A4)

- 3.5.1 There is very low distinctiveness developed land; sealed surface along the eastern boundary of the site. This habitat does not require a condition assessment.

3.6 Hedgerow (H1)

- 3.6.1 There is a species-rich native hedgerow with trees associated with a bank running adjacent to the bramble scrub in the north of the site. This habitat was assessed to be in a 'moderate' condition, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Hedgerow condition assessment

Criteria	Evidence
Condition	Moderate
Label	Hedgerow H1
A1. Height >1.5 m average along length	Pass
Evidence	Average height >1.5m.
A2. Width >1.5 m average along length	Pass
Evidence	Average width >1.5m.
B1. Gap – Hedge base Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	Pass
Evidence	Good basal growth due to bramble scrub.
B2. Gaps – hedge canopy continuity Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	Fail
Evidence	Canopy has gaps exceeding 10% of total length.
C1. Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation >1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	Fail
Evidence	Hedgerow is bordered by developed land and managed grassland.
C2. Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	Pass
Evidence	Species indicative of nutrient enrichment do not exceed 20% cover.
D1. Invasive and neophyte species >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species.	Pass
Evidence	None recorded.
D2. Current damage >90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities	Fail
Evidence	Damage from debris and litter.
E1. Tree Class There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	Pass

Evidence	Young and mature trees present.
E2. Tree health At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	Pass
Evidence	Trees appear healthy.
Number of Criteria Passed:	7

4 POST INTERVENTION HABITATS

- 4.1 The development plans are provided in Appendix 1 and the post-intervention habitats are shown in Figure 3.
- 4.2 The proposals involve the creation of three padel courts within the existing area of modified grassland. The remaining habitats will be retained and enhanced where possible. As the only habitat impacts involve conversion of modified grassland into developed land; sealed surface, and the retained habitats will be subject to the same management practices as previously, proposed condition assessment tables for the retained habitats have not been provided. The condition assessments of the enhanced habitats, the grassland and hedgerow are provided below; the key change will be to seed the grassland with a suitable meadow mix, such as Emorsgate EM1 or EM2 and plant up the gaps in the hedgerow with woody whips and remove the debris.



Figure 3 Post intervention habitats

Table 4 Post-intervention hedgerow condition assessment

Criteria	Evidence
Condition	Good
Label	Hedgerow H1
A1. Height >1.5 m average along length	Pass

Evidence	Average height >1.5m.
A2. Width >1.5 m average along length	Pass
Evidence	Average width >1.5m.
B1. Gap – Hedge base Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	Pass
Evidence	Good basal growth due to bramble scrub.
B2. Gaps – hedge canopy continuity Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	Pass
Evidence	Canopy gaps will be planted up with native, locally sources where possible whips to close gaps.
C1. Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation >1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	Fail
Evidence	Hedgerow is bordered by developed land and managed grassland.
C2. Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	Pass
Evidence	Species indicative of nutrient enrichment do not exceed 20% cover.
D1. Invasive and neophyte species >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species.	Pass
Evidence	None recorded.
D2. Current damage >90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities	Pass
Evidence	Debris and litter will be removed from the hedgerow by hand.
E1. Tree Class There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	Pass
Evidence	Young and mature trees present.
E2. Tree health	Pass

At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	
Evidence	Trees appear healthy.
Number of Criteria Passed:	9

Table 5 Post-intervention other neutral grassland condition assessment

Criteria	Evidence
Condition	Good
Label	Other neutral grassland
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 (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).	Pass
Evidence	A range of species will be recorded as seeding and management of a suitable mix will occur.
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.	Pass
Evidence	Although regularly managed, the grassland will be tussock-forming resulting in varied sward heights.
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Fail
Evidence	There will likely be no bare ground due to management.
Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Pass
Evidence	No bracken recorded, any found will be removed via management.
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).	Pass
Evidence	None recorded, any found will be removed via management.
There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m ² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat (creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock broad-leaved dock, common nettle, creeping buttercup, greater plantain, white clover and cow parsley are excluded from this count)	Pass
Evidence	This will occur via the seeding of an appropriate and varied mix that will be managed as advertised.

Number of Criteria Passed:	5
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5 SUMMARY OF ONSITE BIODIVERSITY CHANGE

- 5.1 The development proposals will result in a gain of 10.63% for area habitats and a gain of 43.36% for hedgerows. The scheme does meet habitat trading requirements due to a loss of low distinctiveness grassland.

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.15		
	Hedgerow units	0.28		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	10.63%		
	Hedgerow units	43.36%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	1.40	1.54	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.66	0.72	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 4 BNG Results

6 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

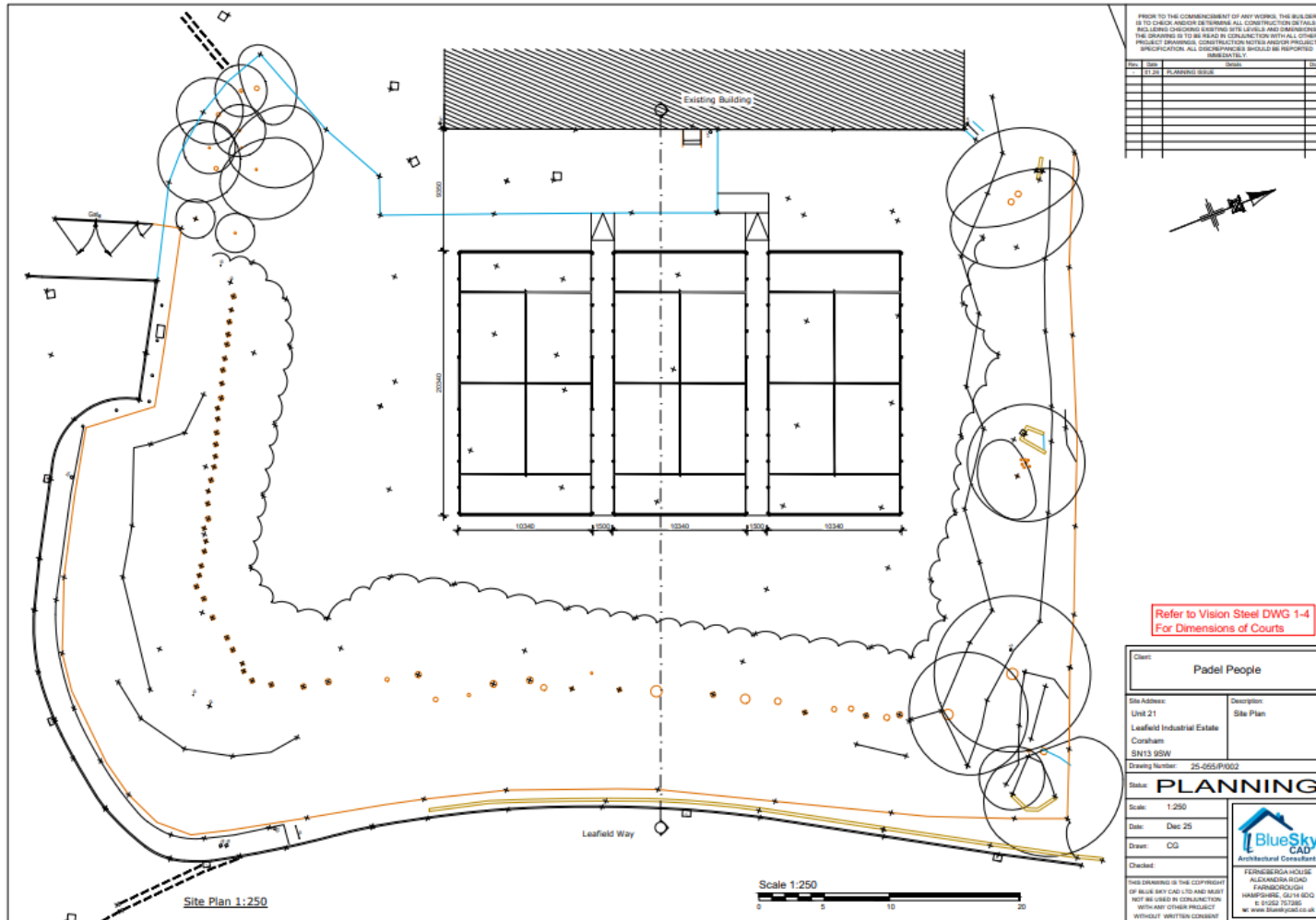


Figure 5 Site Plan (BlueSkyCAD, Drawing No. 25-055/P/002, December 2025)