

2026



Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) for Meadow view Bridge Paddocks, Braydon Road

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This Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) has been prepared for the development at **Meadow** view Bridge Paddocks, Braydon Road, Swindon. It details the strategy to protect existing ecological features and create new habitats to deliver a measurable biodiversity uplift in accordance with the UK Environment Act 2021.

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP)

Project: Meadow view Bridge Paddocks, Braydon Road, Swindon

Date: March 3, 2026

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1. Project Overview & Regulatory Context

The proposed development includes infrastructure for mobile homes, touring caravans, parking, and landscaping. Under the Environment Act 2021, the project is mandated to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This plan utilizes the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Small Sites Metric v4.0) to quantify ecological impact and enhancement.

2. Existing Site Conditions (Baseline)

The site currently consists of low-diversity habitats totaling 1,000m². Baseline surveys identify two primary habitat types:

Habitat Type	Area / Length	Condition	Baseline Units (BU)
Poor Semi-Improved Grassland	1,000m ²	Poor	2.50 BU
Species-Poor Hedgerow	50m	Poor	1.25 BU
Total Pre-Development Value			3.75 BU

3. Biodiversity Metric Summary

The revised site layout prioritizes hedgerow enhancement and creation to offset the loss of grassland.

- Total Net Change: +2.5 BU.

- Percentage Gain: 67%, significantly exceeding the 10% statutory requirement.

Post-Development Habitat Breakdown

Habitat Type	Area / Length	Target Condition	Post-Dev Units
Retained Grassland	300m ²	Poor	0.75 BU
New Species-Rich Hedgerow	60m	Good	3.00 BU
Upgraded Existing Hedgerow	50m	Good	2.50 BU
Total Post-Development Value			6.25 BU

4. Proposed Enhancement Actions

To achieve the projected 67% gain, the following specific ecological actions will be implemented:

Habitat Creation and Upgrading

- **Hedgerow Upgrade:** The existing 50m of "Species-Poor" hedgerow will be enhanced to "Species-Rich" status by inter-planting with native species such as Hawthorn and Blackthorn.
- **New Hedgerow Planting:** 60m of new species-rich hedgerow will be established to provide wildlife corridors and compensate for reduced grassland retention.
- **Grassland Management:** 300m² (30%) of existing grassland will be retained. Mowing frequency will be reduced to encourage local flora and support invertebrate populations.

Species-Supporting Features

- **Native Planting:** All new hedgerows will utilize native UK species to maximize benefit for local birds and pollinators.
- **Avoidance of Loss:** The plan avoids the removal of any existing hedgerows to maintain established ecological boundaries.

5. Long-Term Management & Monitoring

A 30-year habitat management plan is required to ensure the target conditions ("Good") are achieved and maintained.

- **Responsibility:** The developer (Mr. Fry) is responsible for initial works, while a site management company with ecologist oversight will manage long-term maintenance.
- **Hedgerow Maintenance:** Pruning and maintenance will occur every three years to maintain density and health.
- **Annual Monitoring:** Botanical surveys and hedgerow condition assessments will be conducted annually to verify BNG performance.
- **Survey Timing:** Final validation of metric inputs requires detailed botanical surveys to be conducted between May and September.

6. Implementation Timeline

Phase	Action	Responsibility
Construction	Protection of retained grassland (300m ²)	Developer
Post-Construction	Planting 60m new hedgerow; upgrading 50m existing	Landscaping Contractor
Years 1–30	Annual monitoring and 3-yearly hedgerow maintenance	Management Company

This 30-year maintenance schedule is designed to ensure the new and upgraded species-rich hedgerows at Bridge Paddocks reach and maintain "Good" ecological condition. The plan aligns with the Environment Act 2021 and the Small Sites Metric (SSM) requirements for long-term habitat management.

30-Year Hedgerow Management Schedule

Phase 1: Implementation & Establishment (Years 0–5)

The primary focus is on successful plant establishment and reaching the target "Good" condition.

Year	Activity	Responsibility
Year 0	Initial Planting: Installation of 60m of new species-rich hedgerow and infill planting of 50m existing hedgerow using native species like Hawthorn and Blackthorn.	Developer / Specialist Contractor
Year 1	Watering & Weeding: Frequent watering during dry spells and manual weeding around base of new plants to reduce competition.	Management Company
Years 1–5	Annual Monitoring: Botanical surveys and condition assessments conducted between May and September.	Site Ecologist
Year 3	First Formative Prune: Light pruning to encourage dense, bushy growth and a strong base.	Management Company
Year 5	Condition Review: Comprehensive assessment to ensure the hedgerow is on track to meet "Good" status.	Site Ecologist

Phase 2: Long-Term Management (Years 6–30)

Once established, the focus shifts to maintaining structural integrity and species diversity.

- Rotational Maintenance (Every 3 Years): Hedgerows will be trimmed on a three-year cycle to allow for flowering and fruiting, which supports local bird and invertebrate populations.
- Annual Surveys: Continued annual botanical surveys to monitor species richness and overall health.
- Gap Infilling: Periodic inspection for any dead or diseased plants; replacements must be native species to maintain "Species-Rich" status.

- **Structural Management:** Ensuring the hedgerow maintains a minimum height and width suitable for "Good" condition under SSM criteria.
- **Ecologist Oversight:** A qualified ecologist will oversee management to ensure all actions align with the Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To maintain the 67% Biodiversity Net Gain, the following must be met:

1. **Species Diversity:** Minimum of 5+ native woody species per 30m stretch.
2. **Condition:** Attainment of "Good" condition as defined by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.
3. **Longevity:** Full 30-year commitment to management and monitoring.

30-Year Grassland Management Schedule (Retained Area)

Phase 1: Initial Transition (Years 1–5)

The focus is on shifting from intensive management to a biodiversity-led approach.

Year	Activity	Responsibility
Year 1	Baseline Survey: Conduct a detailed botanical survey (May–September) to verify the starting condition.	Site Ecologist
Years 1–5	Reduced Mowing: Implement a maximum of 2–3 cuts per year to allow plants to flower and set seed.	Management Company
Years 1–5	Arisings Removal: Ensure all grass cuttings (arising) are removed from the site to lower soil fertility and encourage wildflower growth.	Management Company
Year 3 & 5	Condition Assessment: Evaluate the sward for invasive species or scrub encroachment.	Site Ecologist

Phase 2: Long-Term Management (Years 6–30)

Ongoing maintenance ensures the habitat remains functional for local wildlife.

- Low-Frequency Mowing: Continue the "cut and lift" regime, typically with one cut in early spring and one in late summer/autumn after seeds have dropped.
- Scrub Control: Monitor for and manually remove woody scrub (e.g., bramble) to prevent the 300m² area from transitioning into scrubland.
- Invasive Species Management: Spot-treat or manually remove injurious weeds (e.g., broad-leaved dock, creeping thistle) to maintain habitat quality.
- Annual Monitoring: Conduct yearly botanical surveys to track species diversity and ensure the area continues to meet the "Poor" condition baseline at a minimum, aiming for gradual improvement.

- Reporting: Maintain a 30-year log of management actions and survey results for local planning authority review.

Key Management Principles

- Avoidance of Loss: The primary goal is to protect the 300m² area from any further development or hardstanding.
- No Fertilizers: No artificial fertilizers or pesticides are to be used within the retained area to protect soil health and plant diversity.
- Ecological Oversight: All major management shifts must be approved by a qualified ecologist to ensure compliance with the Environment Act 2021.

To ensure the new and upgraded hedgerows meet the "Species-Rich" criteria (typically requiring 5 or more woody species in a 30m section) and reach "Good" condition, the following checklist of native species is recommended.

Recommended Hedgerow Species Checklist

Primary Species (approx. 70% of total mix)

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*): The foundational species; provides excellent nesting structure and high-value berries for birds.
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*): Dense and hardy; provides early-season nectar for pollinators and sloes for wildlife.

Diversity Enhancers (to reach Species-Rich status)

To satisfy the Small Sites Metric (SSM) requirements for high biodiversity value, these should be mixed throughout:

- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*): Fast-growing and provides nuts for small mammals.
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*): A hardy native that adds structural variety and autumn color.
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*): Offers late-season berries and red winter stems for visual and ecological interest.
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*): An evergreen addition that provides vital winter shelter for birds.
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*): Supports a wide variety of specialized insects and provides unique pink/orange fruits.

Planting Specifications

- Density: Plant at a rate of 5–7 plants per linear meter in a double-staggered row to ensure a thick, stock-proof barrier.
- Plant Type: Use 2-year-old bare-root transplants (40–60cm) to ensure better establishment rates.
- Protection: Use biodegradable mulch mats to suppress weeds and spiral guards to protect young plants from rabbit damage.

- Timing: All planting should be carried out during the dormant season (November to March).

This concludes the detailed documentation for the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan at Bridge Paddocks.

Executive Summary

This report outlines the strategy to achieve a significant biodiversity uplift for the proposed development at Bridge Paddocks. By prioritizing hedgerow creation and enhancement over less diverse habitats, the project delivers a 67% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), far exceeding the 10% statutory requirement mandated by the UK Environment Act 2021.

Baseline Ecological Value

The site currently comprises 1,000m² of low-diversity land.

- Grassland: 1,000m² of "Poor" semi-improved grassland (2.50 BU).
- Hedgerow: 50m of "Species-Poor" hedgerow in poor condition (1.25 BU).
- Total Pre-Development Value: 3.75 Biodiversity Units (BU).

Enhancement Strategy & Metric Results

The development adopts a "hedgerow-focused" enhancement strategy to maximize ecological resilience.

Habitat Action	Detail	Post-Dev Value
Retention	300m ² (30%) of existing grassland protected.	0.75 BU
Creation	60m of new Species-Rich Hedgerow installed.	3.00 BU
Enhancement	50m existing hedge upgraded to "Good" condition.	2.50 BU
Final Outcome	+2.5 BU Net Change (+67%)	6.25 BU

30-Year Management & Monitoring Plan

To ensure the long-term success of these enhancements, a mandatory 30-year management framework is established:

Hedgerow Management (Years 1–30)

- **Species Upgrading:** Existing hedges will be inter-planted with native species like hawthorn and blackthorn.
- **Rotational Maintenance:** Maintenance will occur every 3 years to support structural density and wildlife nesting.
- **Condition Targets:** New and existing hedges must reach and maintain "Good" condition standards.

Grassland Management (Years 1–30)

- **Reduced Mowing:** Mowing frequency will be strictly reduced to encourage native flora and invertebrate populations.
- **Preservation:** 300m² is designated for retention, with no future development or wildflower conversion planned for this area to ensure compliance.

Monitoring & Governance

- **Annual Surveys:** Botanical surveys and condition assessments will be conducted yearly.
- **Responsibility:** Initial works are the responsibility of the developer (Mr. Fry), with long-term oversight by a specialist site management company.
- **Metric Validation:** Final inputs must be verified by botanical surveys conducted between May and September.

Conclusion

The proposed enhancements align with the Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles, specifically focusing on avoiding habitat loss, transparent metric application, and long-term sustainability. This plan ensures the Bridge Paddocks development provides lasting ecological benefits for the Swindon area.