

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment – Accompanying Report

Land at Cherhill, Calne, Wiltshire

March 2026

1. Introduction and Policy

- 1.1. The Environment Act 2021, aims to place nature recovery at the centre of political decision making at both the national (England) and local level. A principle element of the Environment Act 2021 is the requirement, through Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), that new developments must deliver a mandatory 10% net gain for biodiversity (subject to certain exemptions).
- 1.2. The 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool' (SBMCT) is a nationally recognised tool for demonstrating quantifiable net gain for biodiversity and the SBMCT must be used to calculate biodiversity net gain. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved by creating biodiversity either on-site or off-site. Biodiversity net gain can also be achieved via the purchase of biodiversity units. If a development cannot achieve either on-site or off-site biodiversity net gain (or a mixture of both) by the aforementioned options, statutory biodiversity credits can be purchased. Biodiversity net gain must be secured for at least 30 years.
- 1.3. Icon Ecology was commissioned by BK Commercial Group in December 2025 to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment to inform a planning application for a new general store building, set within grassland adjacent to existing agricultural structures, at Cherhill, Calne, Wiltshire, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. This report accompanies the prepared SBMCT, providing a summary of the results of the SBMCT and justifies the choice of habitat definitions, distinctiveness, target habitat condition and temporal factors where appropriate.

2. Background Statements

- 2.1. It is understood that and it should be noted that:
 - The development is not phased;
 - No irreplaceable habitats are present on-site;
 - The applicant understands that should planning permission be granted, it shall be subject to the biodiversity gain condition; and
 - The applicant is aware of any activities undertaken at the site, on or after the 30th January 2020, which have resulted in a degradation in the baseline biodiversity value of the site. This is discussed further in Section 4.4 below.

3. Surveyor and Author's Experience

- 3.1. The surveyor and author is Jack Crump (Ref: IE/JC). Jack Crump is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM), with over 18 years of relevant experience within a consultancy setting. Jack Crump has been undertaking and advising on Biodiversity Net Gain Assessments since 2012, and is therefore suitably authoritative to assess these proposals. As such, the findings and assessment detailed within this Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment can be relied upon to inform the planning application.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. In accordance with DEFRA's 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide' (July 2025), the 'before development' (existing baseline) information has been input into the SBMCT. This information has been obtained from ecological survey of the site (Phase 1 Habitat and Habitat Condition Assessment 16th December 2025), undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist (Ref IE/JC), as well as from information obtained from historical aerial photographs.
- 4.2. The 'after/post development' information, obtained from the "Landscape Mitigation Strategy", plan prepared by WHLandscape (March 2026) (see Appendix 1137/1), with additional habitat input provided by Icon Ecology, has also been entered into the SBMCT. This allows the relevant pre-development habitat baseline (e.g. Habitat units, Hedgerow units & Watercourse units) to be quantified and the change resulting from development measured.
- 4.3. A range of guidance documents have been utilised to inform this assessment and the condition assessment of existing habitats within the site as well as the condition of habitats following completion of development. DEFRA's 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide' (July 2025), 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology' (v1.0.2, July 2025), UKHab 'The UK Habitat Classification – Version 2.0' (2023) and 'Planning Practice Guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain' (May 2024) being the primary guidance documents. These documents have been supplemented with guidance provided within the Joint Nature Conservation Committee [2010, as amended] 'Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit'; 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management [CIEEM] [2013]'; and the Farm Environment Plan (FEP) manual (third edition 2010).
- 4.4. Based on a review of freely available aerial photography, it is understood that a small area of grassland habitat to the south of the proposed General Purpose Store has been changed to developed land; sealed surface (hard-surfaced turning area). This change has occurred at some point between 22nd April 2021 and 18th May April 2025. As the grassland removal associated with the site occurred after the 30th January 2020, the pre-development BNG habitat baseline to inform this assessment is based on the aforementioned area comprising grassland, rather than developed land; sealed surface. This area of grassland is assumed to be of the same type and condition as the grassland associated with the wider site.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment – Strategic Significance

- 5.1. Wiltshire Council have formally published and adopted the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and the site is located within an area identified to 'Create More Open Mixed Habitats' within the LNRS. In accordance with 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide' (July 2025), the baseline strategic significance values for habitat parcels in site have been scored as 'Low - Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy, with a multiplier of '1.0' applied to all pre-development habitat categories in the 'Strategic significance' drop-down menu column.
- 5.2. Post-development, based on the habitats proposed for creation, the definitions for 'High' strategic significance are not met (and the 'Medium' category cannot be applied, when an LNRS has been published). Accordingly, a multiplier of '1.0' (Low - Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy) has therefore been applied to all post-development habitat categories for the 'Strategic significance' drop-down menu column.

6. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment – Before Development (On- Site)

- 6.1. This section references, justifies and discusses the before development habitat categories and their condition selected from the drop-down menus of the SBMCT within tab 'A-1 On-Site Habitat Baseline'. All relevant condition assessment sheets are provided in Appendix 1137/2.

On-Site Habitat Baseline (tab A-1)

- 6.2. **Urban – 'Developed land; sealed surface'; Condition – N/A:** Area of the site comprising an existing hard-surface access track. No condition assessment for this habitat type is required (Total habitat units = 0.00).
- 6.3. **Grassland – 'Modified grassland'; Condition – Moderate:** The majority of the site associated with the built footprint comprises of grassland habitat. The habitat passes 5 of 7 condition assessment criterion, including the 'essential criterion' (criterion A), which results in a condition assessment score of 'Moderate' (Total habitat units = 2.56).

7. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment – After Development (On- Site)

- 7.1. This section references, justifies and discusses the after development habitat categories and their condition selected from the drop-down menus of the SBMCT, within tab 'A-2 On-Site Habitat Creation'.

On-Site Habitat Creation (tab A-2)

- 7.2. **Urban 'Developed land; sealed surface'; Condition – N/A:** This habitat includes the newly created building and hard-surfaced access and turning. The SBMCT automatically prescribes the condition of this habitat as N/A (Total habitat units delivered = 0.00).
- 7.3. **Individual trees 'Rural tree'; Condition – Moderate:** 88 native trees are proposed to be planted within an area of retained modified grassland, with approximately 3m spacing. Using the precautionary principle, these trees are considered to be in the 'small' size class. The 'Tree helper' box in the Main Menu tab of the SBMCT has been utilised to calculate the total area of habitat provided by these trees. The habitat would pass a minimum of 4 of the condition assessment criterion, resulting in a condition assessment score of 'Moderate' (Total habitat units = 1.10).
- 7.4. **Temporary impact.** The proposals require the creation of a bund within the retained grassland to the west of the proposed general store building. The creation of this bund within the retained grassland is considered no more than a temporary impact, with baseline habitat type and condition highly likely restored within two years of the initial impact. As such this temporary impact does not need to be recorded within the SBMCT.

8. Result

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment – Area Habitat Unit Score

- 8.1. The metric determines the 'On-site habitat baseline' to equal a total of **2.56 Area habitat units**, and 'On-site post-intervention' to equal a total of **2.93 Area habitat units**. Overall, the metric calculates a 'Total net unit change' for Area habitat units of **+0.37 units**, a 'Total net % change' of **+14.63%**.

9. Summary & Conclusion

- 9.1. In order to inform the planning application, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment calculation has been carried out using the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool' (SBMCT). The BNG Assessment calculates that a biodiversity net gain of +0.37 Area habitat units results from the proposed development, which also satisfies the 'Trading Rules'. This represents a total on-site biodiversity net percentage change of +14.63% Area habitat units.
- 9.2. On-site, the proposals can therefore result in at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity. The proposals are therefore in compliance with the Environment Act 2021.

Enclosed:

Plan P-1137/BNG1 – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment: Before

Plan P-1137/BNG2 – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment: After

Appendix 1137/1 – Landscape Mitigation Strategy; WHLandscape (March 2026)

Appendix 1137/2 – Relevant Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Copyright

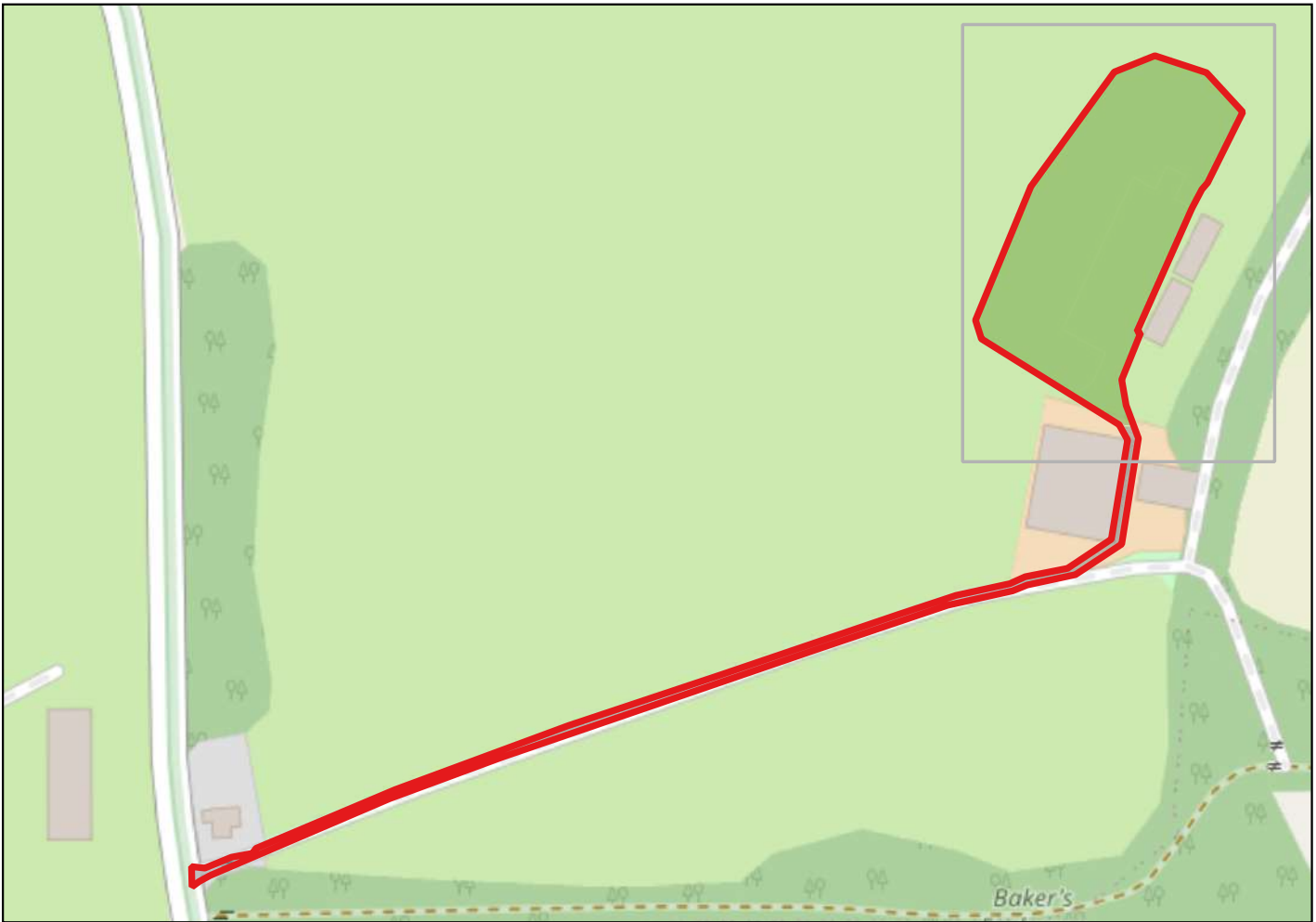
The copyright of this document remains with Icon Ecology. All rights reserved. The contents of this document therefore must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part for any purpose without the prior written consent of Icon Ecology.

Legal Guidance & Confidentiality

The information set out within this report in no way constitutes a legal opinion on the relevant legislation. The opinion of a legal professional should be sought if further advice is required. This report may contain sensitive information relating to protected species. All records of Badger setts must remain confidential including when uploaded to online planning portals or circulated publicly.

Liability

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning client and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Icon Ecology no other party may use, or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Icon Ecology for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. No warranty, express or implied, is made as to the advice in this report. The content of this report is partly based on information provided by third parties; Icon Ecology accepts no liability for any reliance placed on such information. This report is subject to the restrictions and limitations referenced in Icon Ecology's Terms of Business.



Key:
 Site boundary

A-1: On-Site Habitat Baseline				
	Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Condition	Ha
	Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	N/A	0.1101
	Grassland	Modified grassland	Moderate	0.6396

Icon Ecology

Land at Cherhill, Calne, Wiltshire

Biodiversity Net Gains Assessment: Before

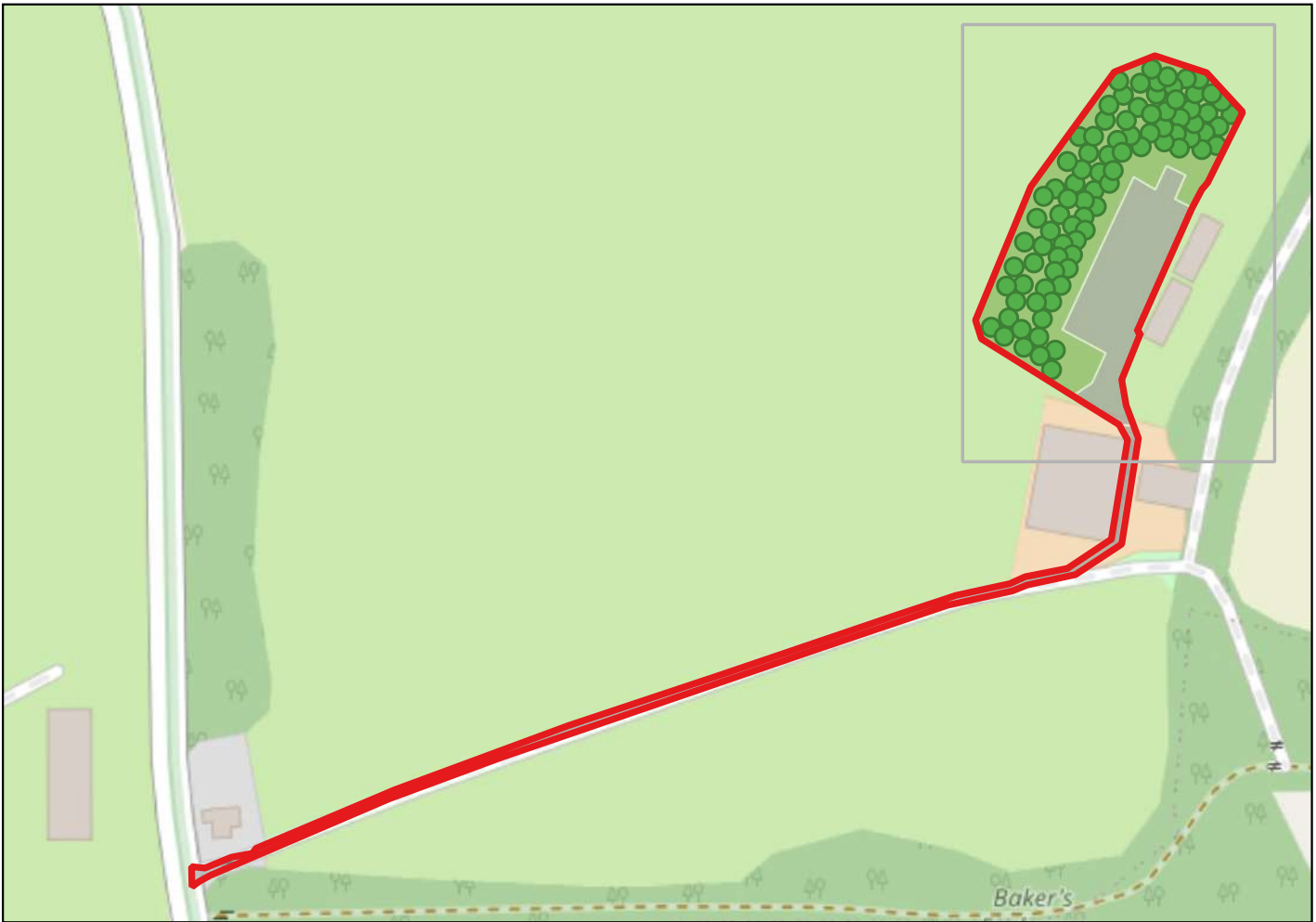
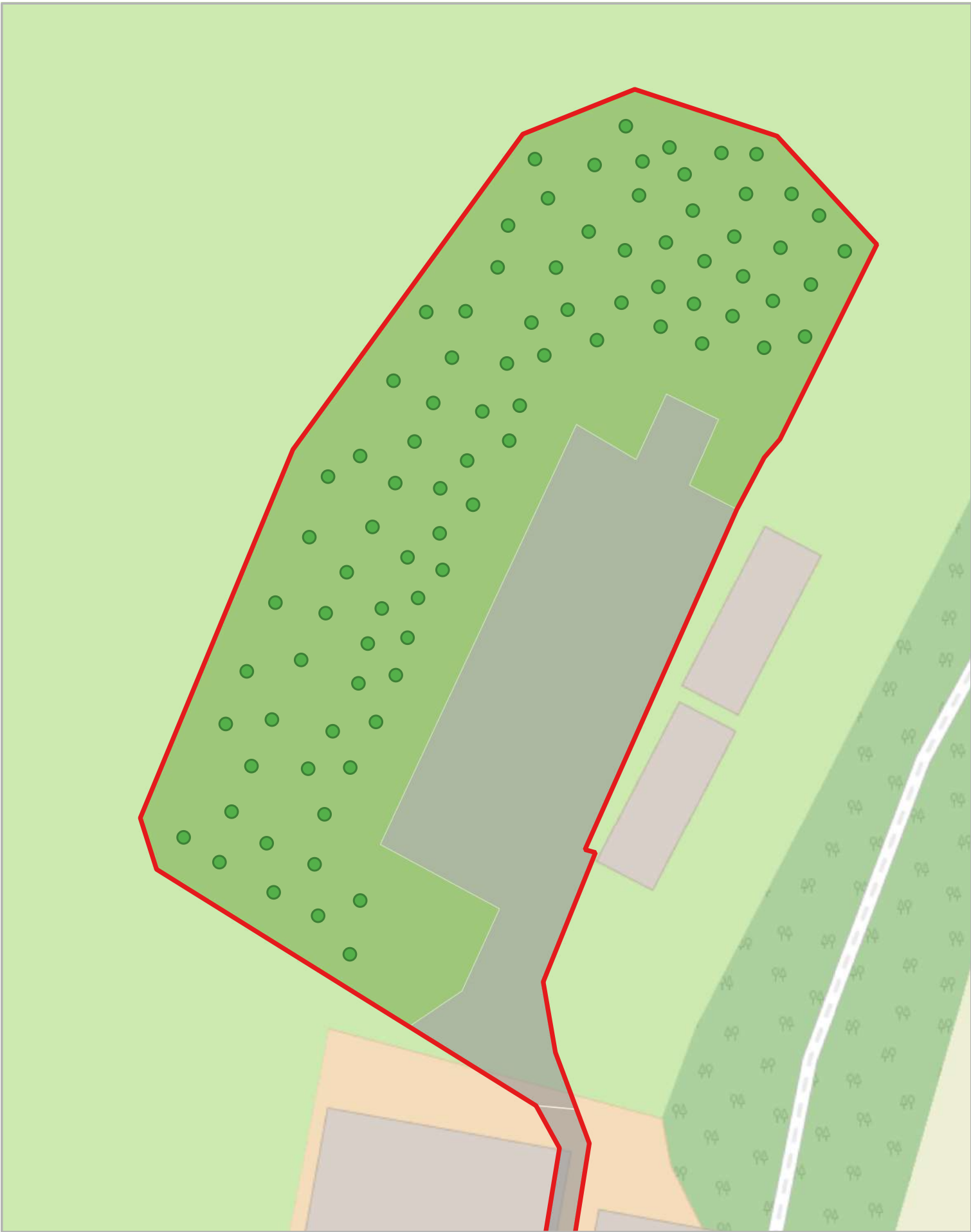


P-1137/BNGA1

A

March 2026

PROJECT
TITLE
FIGURE No
REVISION
DATE



Key:

 Site boundary

A-1: On-Site Habitat Baseline (Retained)

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Condition	Ha
 Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	N/A	0.1101
 Grassland	Modified grassland	Moderate	0.4593

A2: On-Site Habitat Creation

Broad Habitat	Proposed Habitat	Condition	Ha
 Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	N/A	0.1803
 Individual trees	Rural tree (small x88)	Moderate	0.3583

Icon Ecology

Land at Cherhill, Calne, Wiltshire

Biodiversity Net Gains Assessment: After



P-1137/BNGA2

PROJECT
TITLE
FIGURE No
REVISION
DATE

A

March 2026

Recommended Tree Species					
Scientific name	Common name	Specification*	Girth (cm)	Approx. height	%
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple	Whip	-	90-120cm	15
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	Whip	-	90-120cm	10
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Whip	-	90-120cm	15
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	Whip	-	90-120cm	20
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab apple	Whip	-	90-120cm	15
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild cherry	Whip	-	90-120cm	10
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird cherry	Whip	-	90-120cm	10
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	Transplant	-	60-80cm	5
* Approximately 10% of the total tree mix should comprise larger stock (Light Standard - Standard)					



KEY:

 - Site

 - Existing access road

Proposed vegetation

 - Tree

Other

 - Stock proof fence

This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of WHLandscape's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment.

WHLandscape accepts no liability for any use of this drawing other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.

If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print this drawing to the correct scale. Refer to written dimensions where provided.

© Copyright WH Landscape Consultancy Ltd. This drawing is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained or disclosed to any unauthorised person, either wholly or in part without the written consent of WHLandscape.

Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2026. All rights reserved.
WHLandscape licence number: LAN1001422.

Base plan provided by BK Grain.
Drawing Title: Site Location Plan. Drawing No: 2528P-P2-101



WHLandscape
RESIDENTIAL • AGRICULTURAL • EQUESTRIAN • COMMERCIAL

Sandcliffe House, Northgate Street,
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1JT
t: 01380 727539 e: info@whlandscape.co.uk

Project:
General Purpose Store, Fairholme Farm

On behalf of:
BK Grain

Drawing title:
Landscape Mitigation Strategy

Drawing number:
WHL-2098-05

Rev:

Date:
Mar 26

Scale:
1:750 @ A3

DB:
ES

CB:
WH

Appendix 1137/2

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Land at Cherhill, Calne, Wiltshire	Survey date and Surveyor name	16/12/2025 IE/JC
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	
Habitat Description			
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	Y	Ave. 6sp/m2 across 8 spot checks
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	N	More than 5% poaching damage
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y	
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			Y
Number of criteria passed			5
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/√	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	Y	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Footnotes			
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			