
Soho Grange Stud, Ashley

Biodiversity Net Gain Statement – Statutory Biodiversity Metric

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Client: Arena Global
Management Ltd
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Author: Emma Shaw
Reviewer: Kate Hayward
www.seasonsecology.co.uk



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1. Identification of Interventions

- 1.1.1 Seasons Ecology was instructed by Arena Global Management Ltd, on behalf of the landowner, to produce a statement on biodiversity net loss/gain in relation to the development at Soho Grange Stud, Ashley, SN13 8AN (central grid reference: ST 81067 68189).
- 1.1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application for an extension to the existing stables and construction of an outdoor horse-riding arena and temporary rural worker's dwelling (mobile home). No loss of hedgerows or trees and no additional external lighting is proposed.

2. Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation Method

- 2.1.1 Anticipated biodiversity net loss or gain across the site has been calculated through use of The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (DEFRA, 2024).
- 2.1.2 Calculations have been made based on measurements and habitats shown on the baseline plan (UKHab Habitat Plan) and the latest landscaping scheme. The baseline UKHab Habitat Plan is provided at Annex 1 and the post-development UKHab Habitat Plan is provided at Annex 2.
- 2.1.3 The site was visited on 28th August 2025 by Senior Ecologist, Emma Shaw, to map the baseline habitats on site.

3. Identification of Baseline Metric Components

- 3.1.1 The site boundary is approximately 0.55 hectares in size and is located within a modified grassland field unit. The site includes a barn with surrounding concrete and gravel landscaping.

3.2 Habitat Units

- 3.2.1 *Modified Grassland* – This is the dominant habitat on site, with the area across the development site measuring approximately 0.3949ha, of which approximately 0.0651ha will be retained and enhanced to other neutral grassland in moderate condition post-development. The second area of grassland across the south of the site, to be utilised for BNG mitigation habitats, measures approximately 0.0786ha of which all will be replaced by traditional orchard habitat post-development, with the modified grassland retained beneath this proposed habitat.
- 3.2.2 *Developed Land; Sealed Surface* – This includes the footprint of the existing barn and the hard standing concrete skirt surrounding it, measuring a total area of approximately 0.0302ha, of which the barn, measuring approximately 0.0141ha, will be retained post-development.
- 3.2.3 *Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface* – An area of gravel landscaping, comprising a parking area and access track, is located in the north-east of the site. This area measures approximately 0.0464ha, of which all will be retained post-development.

3.3 Hedgerow and Line of Tree Units

- 3.3.1 There are no hedgerows or lines of trees present on site; therefore, there are no baseline units within this category.



3.4 Watercourse Units

- 3.4.1 There are no watercourses present on site; therefore, there are no baseline units within this category.

3.5 Irreplaceable Habitats

- 3.5.1 There are no irreplaceable habitats present on or adjacent to the site, therefore impacts on these types of habitats do not need to be considered for this proposal.

4. Identification of Post-Development Metric Components

4.1 Habitat Units

- 4.1.1 *Developed Land; Sealed Surface* – A temporary rural worker's dwelling (mobile home), an extension to the existing barn, a muck heap and an additional area of hard standing are proposed on site. The footprint of these areas will measure a total area of approximately 0.031ha.
- 4.1.2 *Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface* – The total footprint of the proposed new access track, parking area and horse arena will occupy approximately 0.3149ha.
- 4.1.3 *Other Neutral Grassland* – An area of existing modified grassland will be enhanced to achieve other neutral grassland in the north of the site, measuring a total area of approximately 0.0651ha.
- 4.1.4 *Traditional Orchard* – An area of existing modified grassland, located in the south of the site, measuring approximately 0.0786ha in size will be planted as a traditional orchard, retaining the existing grassland beneath the proposed orchard.
- 4.1.5 *Individual Trees (Rural)* – A total of eight small-sized, native, broadleaved trees will be planted across the enhanced other neutral grassland in the north of the site.

4.2 Hedgerow and Line of Tree Units

- 4.2.1 There are no hedgerows or lines of trees proposed on site; therefore, there are no post-development units within this category.

4.3 Watercourse Units

- 4.3.1 There are no watercourses proposed on site; therefore, there are no post-development units within this category.



5. Habitat Condition Assessments

5.1 Baseline Condition Assessments

5.1.1 Baseline Condition Assessment tables for relevant habitats are provided below:

Table 1: Condition Assessment: Grassland – Modified Grassland

Condition Assessment Criteria	Criteria Passed or Failed	Evidence
There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition).	✗*	The existing grassland does not contain more than 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² , meaning this criterion is failed.
Sward height is varied creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	✓	The majority of modified grassland is currently horse-grazed and was of a varying sward height at the time of survey providing opportunities for microclimates. Therefore, this criterion is passed.
Some scattered scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area.	✓	There are no scrub species present within the sward. Therefore, this criterion is passed.
Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. E.g., excessive poaching, damage from machinery use/storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	✗	There was physical damage present within the grassland due to poaching from the horses within the field, therefore this criterion is failed.
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	✗	There is more than 10% bare ground cover within the grassland (due to poaching), therefore this criterion is failed.
Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	✓	There is no bracken present in the existing grassland, and this species is not present within the immediate vicinity of the site. Therefore, it is unlikely the species will encroach on the grassland, and this criterion is passed.
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	✓	There are no invasive, non-native plant species in the existing grassland that are listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, and these species are not present within the immediate vicinity of the site. Therefore, it is unlikely any of these species will encroach on the grassland and this criterion is passed.
Condition Assessment: Poor, passes 4 criteria (excluding the criterion essential for achieving moderate or good condition*)		



5.2 Post-development Condition Assessments

5.2.1 Post-development Condition Assessment tables for relevant habitats are provided below:

Table 2: Condition Assessment: Grassland – Other Neutral Grassland

Condition Assessment Criteria	Criteria Passed or Failed	Evidence
The grassland is a good representation of the habitat type it has been identified as, based on its UKHab description. Indicator species listed by UKHab for the specific grassland habitat type are consistently present.	✓*	Emorsgate EM2 Special General-Purpose Meadow Mixture will be used to create this habitat, containing 80% native grasses and 20% native wildflowers. With the implementation of a management regime, successful establishment and long-term maintenance of this grassland will be achieved. Therefore, this criterion will be passed.
Sward height is varied creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	✓	Grassland will be managed to contain a varying sward height, and the horses on site will be prohibited from entering the grassland area, therefore passing this criterion.
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	✓	Any existing or created areas of bare ground across the grassland will be seeded with a complete meadow seed mixture and monitoring will be carried out to ensure successful colonisation of this habitat across the bare ground, with further seeding carried out if unsuccessful.
Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	✓	The implementation of the correct, recommended management regime will ensure that no bramble encroachment occurs over the habitat areas. There is no bracken evident on site, therefore colonisation of this species is unlikely.
Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition and physical damage accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	✓	The recommended management for this habitat includes initially removing any common nettle, rushes, docks and creeping thistle, or the flower heads cut off before they set seed to ensure these species (indicative of sub-optimal condition) do not become dominant and smother the herbaceous plants and decrease species diversity.
There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m ² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type.	x**	The grassland area will be sown using a Emorsgate Special General-Purpose Meadow Mixture EM2, containing more than 10 vascular plant species. Due to the existing nutrient enrichment of the soil, disturbance within the adjacent developed habitats it cannot be ensured that more than 10 vascular plant species will establish in this area, although efforts will be made to ensure this is the case.
Condition Assessment: Moderate, passes 5 criteria including one essential criterion for achieving moderate condition* (excluding the criterion essential for achieving good condition**).		



Table 3: Condition Assessment: Individual Trees – Rural Tree

Condition Assessment Criteria	Criteria Passed or Failed	Evidence
The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	✓	All eight trees will be native species, to include English oak, field maple and hawthorn. Therefore, this criterion is passed.
The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	✓	All eight trees will be classified as individual rural trees and therefore automatically pass this criterion.
The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	✗	All trees will be immature and small-sized at the time of planting; therefore, this criterion is failed.
There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity) and the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	✓	All trees will be checked to ensure they are in a healthy condition at the time of planting. Correct management and monitoring over the 30-year period associated with BNG will ensure that no adverse impacts on tree health occur. Therefore, this criterion is passed.
Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	✗	The trees will be young and therefore will not contain any of the ecological niches listed at the time of planting, therefore this criterion is failed. There is potential for natural ecological niches to develop within the newly planted trees over the 30-year period associated with BNG.
More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	✓	The eight trees will be surrounded in all directions by enhanced other neutral grassland; therefore, this criterion is passed.
Condition Assessment: Moderate, passed 4 criteria.		



Table 4: Condition Assessment: Grassland - Traditional Orchard

Condition Assessment Criteria	Criteria Passed or Failed	Evidence
Presence of ancient and/or veteran trees.	✗*	The traditional orchard will be immature at the time of planting, therefore, will not contain ancient and/or veteran orchard trees.
Presence of deadwood in or on trees, or on the ground: at least 20% of mature trees have deadwood associated with them. Some examples of deadwood are: standing, attached and fallen trees or limbs; dead stems; branches and branch stubs greater than 10 cm diameter; and internal cavities. The types and distribution of deadwood provide a range of habitats suitable to support a wide assemblage of saproxylic invertebrates.	✗*	The orchard trees will be young in age at the time of planting, therefore will not contain any deadwood features.
Less than 5% of fruit trees are smothered by scrub. Small patches of dense scrub and/or scattered scrub growing between trees can be beneficial to biodiversity, however these occupy less than 10% of ground cover.	✓	The existing grassland and the orchard will be managed to avoid any scrub encroaching into the area; therefore, this criterion will be passed.
There is evidence of formative and/or restorative pruning to maintain longevity of trees.	✓	The orchard trees will be subject to a regular pruning regime and management to ensure longevity, therefore passing this criterion.
At least 95% of the trees are free from damage caused by humans or animals, for example browsing, bark stripping or rubbing on non-adjusted ties.	✓	New orchard tree planting will be protected from damage by humans or animals through the use of tree guards or tree fencing, therefore passing this criterion.
Grassland is not overgrazed, poaching is not evident around the trees, with no more than 10% of trees poached under the canopy.	✓	The orchard grassland will not be grazed, as horses will not be allowed into the orchard area (fenced off), therefore passing this criterion.
Species richness of the grassland is equivalent to a medium, high, or very high distinctiveness grassland.	✗	The grassland beneath the traditional orchard will be modified grassland (low distinctiveness), therefore failing this criterion.
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 10% of ground cover.	✓	No invasive non-native species are currently present in the existing grassland, and it will be managed and monitored to ensure it remains free of invasive species.
Condition Assessment: Moderate, passes 5 criteria (excluding both criteria essential for achieving good condition*).		



6. Strategic Significance

6.1 Summary of Relevant Local Strategies

Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Wiltshire and Swindon

- 6.1.1 *The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Wiltshire and Swindon provides a clear framework to reverse biodiversity decline and build resilience across the county's landscapes. Developed under the Environment Act 2021, it forms part of a national programme of 48 strategies and contributes to the UK's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030.*

6.2 Wider Environmental Outcomes

Climate Change Mitigation: Measures that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and remove carbon from the atmosphere. Examples of LNRS measures and actions that support carbon reduction include: Tree and woodland planting to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Reducing fertiliser use, as its production is energy-intensive and contributes significantly to emissions.

7.3 Habitats Important in Wiltshire

Trees and Woodland - Wiltshire's woodland and tree habitats are central to its natural character and ecological resilience. Tree cover stands at around 14%, with a target of 17% by 2030. While overall woodland cover is slightly below the national average (8% vs. 10% in England), Wiltshire excels in the quality and diversity of its wooded landscapes. Nationally, woodland creation is increasing, but new woodlands take decades to deliver their full ecological value. Wiltshire's ancient and semi-natural woodlands already provide high-quality habitat and a strong foundation for nature recovery.

12.3 Neutral Grassland

Neutral grasslands are rich in wildlife, store carbon, and contribute to high-quality habitat mosaics. These meadows are ecologically important and part of our cultural heritage, shaped by centuries of traditional management. Since 1935, 97% of lowland meadows have been lost, leaving scattered, fragmented remnants. Wiltshire retains important areas in the north of the county.



7. Assessment of Results

7.1.1 The off-setting calculations result in a net gain of 0.10 habitat units with a total net percentage change of +10.90% habitat units. There are no baseline or post-development units for the hedgerow or watercourse category, therefore there is no unit or percentage change in these categories.

7.1.2 Full calculations are submitted with this report and the final results are provided below.

7.2 Final Results

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.10		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	10.90%		
	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%	0.95	1.04	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

7.3 Assessment of Results

7.3.1 The site is approximately 0.55 hectares in size and lies in a rural location. It currently supports developed sealed surfaces, artificial unsealed surfaces and modified grassland habitats. All baseline habitats have been shown on the Baseline Habitat Plan at Annex 1.

7.3.2 The post-development habitats include developed sealed surfaces, artificial, unsealed surfaces, other neutral grassland (enhanced from modified grassland), traditional orchard (Priority Habitat) and eight small-sized individual trees. The resulting net gain in habitat units is due to the enhancement of modified grassland to other neutral grassland, the creation of traditional orchard habitat and the planting of eight individual native trees. All post-development habitats are shown on the Post-development Habitat Plan at Annex 2.

7.4 Summary of the Strategic Significance

7.4.1 With reference to The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Wiltshire and Swindon, the proposal achieves a net gain in habitat units, achieving a 10.90% gain overall. The development layout provides new features of ecological value by enhancing existing modified grassland, which is of poor condition, to other neutral grassland and creating traditional orchard, both predicted to achieve moderate condition and are of higher distinctiveness. In addition to these habitats, eight small-sized native broadleaved trees will be planted on site. Whilst there is a loss of modified grassland habitat, the grassland is of poor condition and of low ecological value. The proposed habitats will enhance the natural environment and creating new, high-quality habitats that connect with existing wildlife corridors (existing hedgerow and treeline habitats bounding the site). These connections contribute to existing ecological networks and strengthen the green infrastructure network. The traditional orchard and tree planting have been allocated high strategic significance within the BNG metric.



7.5 Mitigation Hierarchy

- 7.5.1 The proposed development has followed the Biodiversity Net Gain mitigation hierarchy by first avoiding impacts where possible and then compensating for unavoidable losses through habitat enhancement and creation. The proposed development retains and enhances areas of modified grassland, transforming them into higher-value habitats, including traditional orchard and other neutral grassland. Although an area of poor condition modified grassland will be lost, this is offset by the creation of habitats of greater ecological value, thereby delivering targeted biodiversity benefits alongside a net gain of 10.90% in habitat units.



8. Annexes

Annex 1: Baseline UKHab Habitat Plan (November 2025)



Annex 2: Post-Development UKHab Habitat Plan (November 2025)

