

Technical Note



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Project: Ratby Sports Club, Desford Ln, Ratby,
Leicester LE6 0JN

Our Reference: 250709.BNG.v1

To: Tony Blanchard

Date: 01 April 2026

Subject: Biodiversity Net Gain Statement

Prepared by: Zachary Mason

Introduction and methodology

Croft Ecology was commissioned by Tony Blanchard, to provide the necessary supporting information on Biodiversity Net Gain for a forthcoming planning application for a of sports pitches and car parking at the Site at Ratby Sports Club, Desford Ln, Ratby, Leicester LE6 0JN (central grid reference: SK 51052 05534) (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').

The purpose of this Technical Note is to present the on-site baseline information for the Site that was used as the basis for the Statutory Metric Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations.

Areas of the Site had been cleared prior to the Site visit undertaken on the 02 December, with areas of vegetation stripped down to the topsoil. The majority of the Site remained uncleared, and details of these uncleared habitats can be found in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Ratby Sport Club (Croft Ecology, April 2026), which should be read in conjunction with this Technical Note. Due to the clearance, the assessment of these areas was undertaken from a combination of survey information from December 2025, and historical satellite imagery. The assessment included:

- An assessment of the baseline habitats within the red line boundary (including a baseline map to UK Hab, Appendix A).
- A condition assessment of all on-site and off-site habitats.

This data was then used to complete the on-site baseline information of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and the associated condition assessment sheets. Post-development calculations for on-site habitats were also undertaken and are summarised in the Indicative Biodiversity Gain Plan for Ratby Sports Club, Ratby (Croft Ecology, April 2026) which should be read in conjunction with this Technical Note.

Personnel

The survey and assessment were undertaken by Imogen Holloway and Zachary Mason. Zachary Mason has 5 years of experience working in the field of ecology and has undertaken and reviewed dozens of walkover surveys/baseline habitat surveys and has been using UK Hab survey methodology for the last 4 years. Zachary has prepared many reports during this time including protected species survey reports, method statements, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal reports (PEA reports) and Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA reports). Zachary holds a level 1 Great Crested Newt (GCN)

licence (2025-84173-CL08-GCN). Imogen has three years' experience of conducting bat surveys, carrying out emergence and re-entry surveys, and bat transect surveys. Imogen also has experience writing PEA and BNG reports and conducting PEA and BNG surveys.

The technical review was undertaken by Jeff Grant CEnv MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist at Croft ecology. Jeff has over 12 years of experience working in the field of ecology and has undertaken and reviewed dozens of walkover surveys/baseline habitat surveys and has been using UK Hab survey methodology for the last four years.

Survey Date and Conditions

Areas of the Site had been cleared prior to the survey in December 2025. Due to the clearance, the baseline BNG assessment was undertaken from historical satellite imagery dating from May 2025, the most recently available imagery of the Site prior to clearance. The areas of cleared land within the red line boundary (see Figure 1) were assessed.



Figure 1. Site boundary, with the Site shown prior to clearance works (basemap source – Mapbox OpenStreetMap)

UK Hab Field Survey

A UK Hab¹ Field Survey was undertaken following the methodology described within v2.0 documentation (2023). It was used as the basis for subsequent completion of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and its associated condition sheets.

A fine-scale minimum mapping unit (of 25m² or 5m) was deemed appropriate for use at the Site given its relatively small scale, consequently, only habitats with an area of 25m² or greater, or linear features 5m in length or greater, were mapped.

The UK Hab uses primary codes whereby habitats are categorised by an increasingly detailed hierarchy until a match is discovered. Secondary codes describe environmental factors that provide additional information such as management regime, hydrology or similar. In this case, each habitat was assigned a Primary Code¹ at the Level 4 hierarchy and secondary codes were applied where these could provide greater context.

During the field survey, all habitats within the Site were thoroughly observed, described, and mapped. A DAFOR abundance (D = dominant, A = abundant, F = frequent, O = occasional, R = rare) was assigned to each botanical species identified in each habitat and nomenclature followed Stace (Stace, 2019).

Results

The following paragraphs describe the degraded habitats of the Site prior to degradation occurring. Assessments are from May 2025 due to the date of available satellite imagery.

Tall forbs: parcel references 30726017 and 30726018

Two areas in the centre of the Site and in the southeast corner (highlighted in red on Figure 1) were cleared at the time of the December visit. Based on the satellite imagery, these were assessed to have been the same habitat and in the same condition as the tall forbs that were surveyed within the wider site (highlighted in yellow on Figure 1 and described in more detail within the PEA report). Photos of the tall forbs within the wider site are shown in Photo 1 and 2. This habitat was assessed to be in poor condition as it lacked a varied vegetation structure and different plant species that were beneficial to wildlife.

¹ UKHab Ltd (2023) <https://www.ukhab.org/>



Figure 1. Satellite imagery from May 2025, used to compare cleared areas of land (highlighted in red) to areas surveyed as tall forbs (highlighted in yellow).



Photo 1: Retained tall forbs within the wider site in December 2025, just outside the southern Site boundary (photo facing south).



Photo 2: Tall forbs within the wider site, just outside the southwest corner of the Site (photo facing northeast, December 2025).

Modified Grassland and Artificially Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface: parcel references 30726016 and 30726016

The area of bare ground in the north of the Site was assessed prior to clearance to have been unsealed surface on the eastern half and modified grassland on the western half (total area highlighted in blue square on Figure 2). The modified grassland was considered to have been comparable to the modified grassland found elsewhere in the Site and therefore for metric purposes the cleared area was assessed to be in poor condition due to a lack of species diversity.



Figure 2. Satellite imagery from May 2025, used to compare cleared areas of land (highlighted in blue) to areas surveyed as modified grassland and unsealed surface (highlighted in purple)

It is understood that planning permission would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition.

A UK Hab Map of the baseline habitats at the Site is provided in Appendix A.

The completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric for the pre-development and post-development value of the on-site and off-site habitats is included within the accompanying Indicative Biodiversity Gain Plan for Land off Ratby Sports Club by Croft Ecology (April 2026).

BNG options

Proposals will remove areas of the grassland and small areas of the pre-degradation tall forbs, which will be replaced with sports buildings, artificial sports pitches and car parking.

Two areas of woodland on Site are detailed within the Croft Ecology Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Ratby Sports Club. One of these areas (in the northwest) will be retained and another area in the east of the Site will be enhanced from poor to moderate condition to provide compensation for the losses as a result of the proposals. Additionally, areas of poor condition modified grassland and areas of poor condition tall forbs will be enhanced to other neutral grassland in good condition through the use of an appropriate seed mix and appropriate management practices. Additionally, 15 small, native trees in moderate condition will be planted around the car park and within the enhanced area of tall forbs. However, off site compensation will still be required to achieve the necessary 10% BNG gain for the development.

Recommendations

The existing baseline score for the Site is **5.72 area habitat** units with the current onsite proposals delivering a loss of 0.20 units, or -3.42%. Additionally, the trading rules are not met with regard to the loss of the low distinctiveness tall forbs and modified grassland from the Site. An additional 0.20 habitat units of low distinctiveness or a higher distinctiveness habitat (such as traditional orchard or lowland meadow) are required to meet the trading rules.

The development therefore requires a further 0.77 area habitat units to achieve 10% BNG gain for the development, but there is insufficient scope to deliver further enhancements on the Site, and as such it is recommended that off-site compensation is sought.

In order for the proposed development to achieve the above BNG and meet the trading rules, the following on-Site (Appendix B) and off-Site habitat creation measures will be required:

- The current proposals show 15 trees planted around the car park and southern Site boundary. These are assumed to be small, moderate condition trees for the BNG calculations. This habitat and condition are considered achievable in the Site setting.
- The eastern area of woodland will be enhanced from poor to moderate condition through coppicing, tree planting and scrub creation. This habitat and condition are considered achievable in the Site setting.
- Areas of modified grassland and tall forbs along the western and southern Site boundaries will be enhanced to other neutral grassland in good condition through the sowing of a more varied and appropriate seed mix and appropriate management practices. This habitat and condition are considered achievable in the Site setting.
- The remaining areas will be taken up with new access, sports buildings and pitches and car parking, as to be expected of a development of this type and scale.
- To ensure the trading rules are met, 0.77 habitat units of any low distinctiveness or a higher distinctiveness habitat will be purchased from an offsite habitat bank provider. It is recommended that, if available, habitat units are purchased from a provider within the same Local Planning Authority (LPA) or the same National Character Area (NCA) as the Site. The units must be a habitat of the same distinctiveness and within the same broad group or

higher to that lost. On this basis, units could be delivered via individual trees, traditional orchard, lowland meadow or similar.

- Once planning permission has been granted, the client will pursue the purchase of these units, or similar available units in the same or neighbouring LPA/NCA.

APPENDIX A – Baseline Habitats Map



