

30-YEAR HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

Site: Roam Free Farm, Markfield Lane, Leicester, LE9 9FH

Planning Reference: 25/01150/FUL

Applicant/Landowner: Sarah Fall

Plan period: 30 Year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

Purpose: Discharge of planning condition relating to BNG

Management period: 30 years

Date: August 2026

1. PURPOSE OF THE HMMP

This Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) sets out the long-term management and monitoring arrangements for the habitats forming part of the approved biodiversity net gain strategy at Roam Free Farm.

The plan has been prepared to support discharge of the planning condition requiring a 30-year HMMP.

The purpose of the HMMP is to:

- retain existing ecological features;
- establish new habitats;
- enhance existing grassland;
- establish new native hedgerows;
- establish proposed tree/microforest planting;
- maintain ecological connectivity;
- deliver the approved Biodiversity Net Gain;
- monitor habitat condition;
- identify and correct failures in habitat establishment;
- provide a clear 30-year management regime.

The government guidance states that HMMPs should set out planned management activities, monitoring, reporting, review arrangements and remedial measures where habitat does not achieve its intended condition.

2. SITE OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives are to:

- A. Maintain the existing native hedgerow.
- B. Protect the mature ash tree.

- C. Establish approximately 290 m of new native hedgerow, subject to confirmation against the approved metric.
 - D. Establish 14 native trees
 - E. Enhance approximately 0.416 ha of modified grassland to the approved target condition.
 - F. Retain approximately 0.538 ha of modified grassland.
 - G. Establish organic horticultural areas.
 - H. Establish organic cereal cropping.
 - I. Establish temporary grass and clover leys.
 - J. Maintain ecological connectivity across the site.
 - K. Reduce nutrient enrichment and excessive management intensity.
 - L. Improve structural and botanical diversity.
 - M. Increase opportunities for insects, birds, bats and small mammals.
 - N. Maintain the approved BNG value for at least 30 years.
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3. BASELINE ECOLOGY

The ecological appraisal recorded:

Modified grassland

Approximately 1.59 ha of modified grassland.

The habitat was assessed as:

- low distinctiveness;
- poor condition;
- species-poor to moderately diverse;
- affected by nutrient enrichment;
- historically subject to horse grazing and cutting.

Existing hedgerow

Approximately 0.08 km of native hedgerow with trees.

The hedgerow was assessed as **good condition**.

It contains predominantly:

- hawthorn;
- elder;
- field maple;
- ash.

The mature ash tree provides additional ecological structure.

4. BNG BASELINE AND TARGET

The supplied BNG assessment records:

Baseline habitat units: 3.17

Post-development habitat units: 3.60

Net habitat gain: 0.43 units

Percentage habitat gain: 13.47%

For hedgerows:

Baseline hedgerow units: 1.00

Post-development hedgerow units: 1.96

Net hedgerow gain: 0.96 units

Percentage hedgerow gain: 96.45%

These figures shall be treated as the approved BNG targets unless amended by the Local Planning Authority or through an approved revision to the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

5. HABITAT DELIVERY

The approved post-development habitat proposals comprise:

Habitat	Area / length	Treatment	Target condition
Modified grassland	0.5383 ha	Retained	Poor
Modified grassland	0.4159 ha	Enhanced	Moderate
Horticulture	0.2070 ha	Created	Other
Cereal crops	0.2166 ha	Created	Other
Temporary grass/clover ley	0.1504 ha	Created	Other
Developed/sealed surface	0.0576 ha	Created	N/A
Existing native hedgerow with trees	0.083 km	Retained	Good
New native hedgerow	0.29 km	Created	Moderate

6. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives are to:

1. maintain the retained hedgerow in good condition;
2. establish the new native hedgerows successfully;
3. enhance selected modified grassland to moderate condition;
4. maintain low-input organic agricultural management;
5. increase plant and invertebrate diversity;
6. increase habitat structure;

7. improve ecological connectivity;
 8. maintain opportunities for bats, birds and hedgehogs;
 9. establish and maintain approximately 14 native trees;
 10. prevent invasive species from compromising habitat objectives;
 11. maintain the BNG habitats for at least 30 years.
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7. MANAGEMENT OF RETAINED MODIFIED GRASSLAND

Target 0.5383 ha retained modified grassland – poor condition

This area is not intended to be substantially improved through the BNG calculation and shall be managed to remain compatible with the approved land-use arrangement.

Management

- remove grazing pressure where specified by the approved management plan;
- mow occasionally;
- avoid unnecessary fertiliser application;
- avoid unnecessary herbicide use;
- prevent encroachment by scrub;
- prevent soil disturbance;
- maintain a continuous grassland sward.

The area shall not be converted to another habitat without prior consideration of the implications for the approved BNG.

8. ENHANCED GRASSLAND

Target 0.4159 ha – moderate condition

The purpose of this management is to increase botanical diversity and habitat structure.

Management principles

- remove intensive grazing;
- cut and collect vegetation occasionally;
- no artificial fertilisation;
- no pesticide use;
- allow some variation in sward height;
- avoid cutting during the main flowering period wherever practicable;
- prevent scrub encroachment;
- retain occasional structural variation.

Indicative cutting regime

During establishment, grassland shall be monitored annually.

Where vigorous growth is suppressing botanical diversity, cutting and removal of arisings shall be undertaken.

A typical regime may comprise:

Spring: no routine cutting.

Summer/autumn: one cut after flowering, with arisings removed.

Additional cutting may be undertaken if required to control vigorous growth.

The precise regime may be adjusted following monitoring.

9. ORGANIC HORTICULTURE

Area 0.2070 ha

The horticultural area shall be managed organically, meaning no artificial chemicals, fertilisers or pesticides will be used on the land.

The area shall contain varieties of species rather than a monocrop and crop rotation shall be implemented.

Management shall aim to provide:

- flowering plants;
- crop diversity;
- overwintering vegetation;
- opportunities for pollinators and invertebrates.

Where practicable, flowering crop margins shall be incorporated into the rotation.

10. ORGANIC CEREAL CROPS

Area 0.2166 ha

The cereal area shall be managed as a low-input organic crop.

Oats or millet may be grown in accordance with the approved agricultural rotation.

Management shall avoid unnecessary pesticide and fertiliser inputs.

Crop rotation shall be used to maintain soil health and reduce pest pressure.

Where practicable, small areas of crop margin or unharvested material may be retained where this does not conflict with agricultural requirements.

11. TEMPORARY GRASS AND CLOVER LEYS

Area 0.1504 ha

The temporary ley shall be managed as part of the organic crop rotation.

Management shall aim to:

- provide soil fertility benefits;
- support pollinating insects;
- provide temporary grassland structure;
- reduce reliance on artificial fertilisers;
- contribute to overall habitat diversity.

- Improve soil structure
- Reduce soil erosion

The ley may be periodically incorporated into the crop rotation in accordance with the approved farming system.

12. EXISTING NATIVE HEDGEROW

Length Approx 0.083 km.

Target Good condition

The existing hedgerow is one of the most important ecological features on the site. It shall therefore be retained and is a priority management feature.

Management shall include:

- minimal cutting where possible;
- rotational cutting rather than cutting the entire hedge every year;
- retention of occasional mature woody growth;
- avoidance of unnecessary removal;
- control of excessive bramble/scrub where necessary;
- be allowed to develop structural diversity;
- retain occasional mature trees;
- be inspected annually.
- replacement planting where small gaps develop, where appropriate.

The objective is to create a dense, structurally diverse hedge with:

- woody growth;
- flowering opportunities;
- fruiting opportunities;
- shelter;
- nesting habitat.

Hedgerow cutting shall take place between November and February.

13. NEW NATIVE HEDGEROWS

Length Approx 0.29 km

Target Moderate condition

The new hedgerows shall be planted using locally appropriate native species.

The species mix should principally comprise locally appropriate native woody species, with hawthorn forming an important component and other suitable native species such as field maple, hazel, dog rose, blackthorn and elder used as appropriate to site conditions.

Establishment

For the first five years:

- failed plants shall be replaced;
- competing vegetation shall be controlled;
- young plants shall be protected from damage;
- watering shall be undertaken during prolonged dry periods where necessary;
- guards/stakes shall be maintained where required.

The hedgerow shall be inspected annually.

14. HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT AFTER ESTABLISHMENT

Once established, the new hedgerows shall be managed through rotational cutting.

The hedgerows shall not all be cut in the same year.

A rotational approach shall ensure that:

- flowering and fruiting opportunities are maintained;
- berries remain available to birds;
- structural diversity is retained;
- dense nesting habitat is maintained.

Cutting shall be undertaken during the autumn/winter period and outside the main bird nesting season.

15. TREE PLANTING

Approximately **14 native trees** are proposed.

The supplied proposals include trees such as:

- walnut;
- wild cherry;
- willow;
- sweet chestnut.

Establishment period

For at least the first five years:

- trees shall be inspected annually;
- guards and stakes shall be maintained;
- failed trees shall be replaced;
- competing vegetation shall be controlled;
- watering shall be undertaken during prolonged drought where possible.

Long-term management

Trees shall be allowed to develop naturally.

Unnecessary pruning shall be avoided.

Deadwood shall generally be retained where it does not create a health and safety risk.

16. ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

The hedgerow network shall be retained as the principal ecological corridor through the site.

Management shall seek to maintain connectivity for:

- bats;
- hedgehogs;
- birds;
- invertebrates;
- small mammals.

No unnecessary breaks shall be introduced into hedgerows.

Where new hedgerows are established, gaps shall be minimised.

17. PESTICIDES AND FERTILISERS

The site operates as an organic smallholding.

Management shall therefore not use chemical:

- synthetic fertiliser use;
- herbicide use;
- insecticide use;
- fungicide use.

Where pest or weed control is required, non-chemical methods shall be considered first.

Any chemical use shall comply with relevant legal requirements and shall avoid unnecessary impacts upon hedgerows, grassland and other habitats.

18. INVASIVE SPECIES

The site shall be inspected for invasive non-native plant species during monitoring visits.

If an invasive species is identified:

1. it shall be recorded;
2. its extent shall be mapped;
3. an appropriate control method shall be identified;

4. control shall be undertaken;
 5. follow-up monitoring shall confirm effectiveness.
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20. HABITAT MONITORING

Monitoring shall assess whether the habitats are progressing towards the approved target conditions.

Monitoring shall include:

- habitat extent;
 - habitat condition;
 - species composition;
 - hedgerow establishment;
 - tree establishment;
 - scrub encroachment;
 - invasive species;
 - evidence of damage;
 - agricultural management;
 - ecological connectivity.
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21. MONITORING SCHEDULE

A practical 30-year monitoring programme is proposed as follows:

Year Monitoring

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|----|---|
| 0 | Baseline/establishment inspection |
| 1 | Establishment monitoring |
| 2 | Habitat and hedgerow monitoring |
| 3 | Habitat and tree establishment monitoring |
| 5 | Formal ecological monitoring |
| 10 | Formal ecological monitoring |
| 15 | Formal ecological monitoring |
| 20 | Formal ecological monitoring |
| 25 | Formal ecological monitoring |
| 30 | Final BNG condition assessment |

Additional inspections shall be undertaken where problems are identified.

22. YEAR 1 ESTABLISHMENT MONITORING

The first monitoring visit shall assess:

- survival of new hedgerow plants;
- survival of trees;
- grassland management;
- crop rotation;
- evidence of grazing;
- damage to retained habitats;
- invasive species;
- establishment problems.

Any significant failures shall trigger remedial action.

23. YEARS 2–5

During the establishment period, particular attention shall be paid to:

- hedgerow survival;
- tree establishment;
- weed competition;
- grassland botanical development;
- inappropriate agricultural practices;
- scrub encroachment.

Replacement planting shall be undertaken where establishment failure threatens the approved habitat target.

24. YEARS 5–30

Monitoring shall progressively focus on habitat condition rather than establishment alone.

The person responsible shall assess whether the habitats are:

- being maintained;
 - progressing towards target condition;
 - declining;
 - being adversely affected by agricultural activities;
 - being affected by external factors.
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25. MONITORING REPORTS

Monitoring reports shall include:

1. date of survey;
2. weather conditions;
3. surveyor details;
4. habitat areas;
5. condition assessment;
6. photographs;
7. management undertaken;
8. problems identified;
9. remedial measures;
10. recommendations for the following period.

Reports shall be retained by the landowner.

Where required by the planning condition or legal agreement, monitoring reports shall be submitted to the LPA.

26. MANAGEMENT ADAPTATION

The HMMP is intended to be adaptive.

If monitoring demonstrates that a habitat is failing to achieve its target condition, the landowner shall identify the cause and implement appropriate remedial action.

Examples include:

Grassland

If diversity is declining:

- reduce cutting frequency;
- increase removal of arisings;
- reduce nutrient inputs;
- review agricultural management.

Hedgerows

If establishment is poor:

- replace failed plants;
- improve protection;
- control competing vegetation;
- provide watering during drought conditions.

Trees

If mortality is high:

- replace failed trees;
- improve aftercare;
- review planting conditions.

Invasive species

If invasive plants spread:

- undertake appropriate control;
 - monitor annually until controlled.
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27. ANNUAL MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Month	Typical management
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January	Hedgerow management where required; tree inspection
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February	Complete winter hedgerow work
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March	Avoid nesting bird disturbance; establishment checks
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April	Check trees and new hedgerows
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May	Grassland growth/botanical monitoring
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June	General habitat inspection
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July	Monitor grassland and agricultural habitats
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August	Review grassland management
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September	Grassland cutting where appropriate
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October	Hedgerow/tree establishment work
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November	Tree/hedgerow planting and replacement
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December	Winter hedgerow management where appropriate
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The schedule may be adjusted according to weather, habitat response and agricultural requirements.

28. RESPONSIBILITIES

Landowner

Sarah Fall

Responsible for ensuring that the HMMP is implemented and that sufficient resources are available for management and monitoring.

Land manager

The person responsible for day-to-day agricultural management shall implement the agreed management prescriptions.

29. LAND OWNERSHIP CHANGES

If the land is transferred to another owner, the incoming landowner shall be informed of:

- the 30-year HMMP;
- the BNG obligations;
- the required habitat management;
- the monitoring requirements;
- the legal mechanism securing the BNG.

The HMMP should be transferred or updated as necessary to reflect any change in ownership. Government guidance specifically recognises the need to consider updating the HMMP if land changes hands.

30. BNG TARGETS

The principal BNG targets are:

Habitat units

Baseline: 3.17

Target post-development: 3.60

Net gain: 0.43 units

Percentage gain: 13.47%

Hedgerow units

Baseline: 1.00

Target post-development: 1.96

Net gain: 0.96 units

Percentage gain: 96.45%

The management regime shall seek to maintain the habitats at or above the condition and extent assumed within the approved BNG calculation.

31. SUCCESS CRITERIA

The HMMP shall be considered successful where:

- existing hedgerows remain intact;
- the mature ash tree is retained;
- new hedgerows establish successfully;
- proposed trees establish successfully;
- enhanced grassland progresses towards its target condition;
- organic cropping is managed as proposed;
- ecological connectivity is maintained;
- habitat condition does not materially deteriorate;
- remedial measures are implemented where necessary;
- the approved BNG outcome is maintained.

Failure of establishment shall not simply be accepted where it would prevent delivery of the approved BNG outcome.

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23. 30-YEAR MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Period	Main objective
Years 0–1	Establish habitats and infrastructure
Years 2–3	Correct establishment failures
Years 4–5	Consolidate habitat management
Years 6–10	Develop target habitat condition
Years 11–15	Maintain and refine management
Years 16–20	Maintain ecological function
Years 21–25	Maintain target condition
Years 26–30	Maintain condition and prepare final assessment

33. LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

The habitats forming part of the approved BNG strategy shall be managed for a minimum of **30 years**.

The landowner shall ensure that:

- habitats are not deliberately degraded;
 - the approved habitat areas are maintained;
 - hedgerows are retained;
 - trees are maintained and replaced where necessary;
 - grassland management continues;
 - organic/low-input agricultural management is maintained;
 - monitoring is undertaken;
 - remedial action is implemented where required.
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34. CONCLUSION

The proposed development provides a relatively simple but ecologically beneficial transition from intensively managed horse-grazed modified grassland towards a diverse, low-input organic agricultural system.

The principal long-term ecological features will be:

- retained native hedgerows;
- new native hedgerows;
- enhanced grassland;
- rotational organic cropping;
- temporary grass/clover leys;
- approximately 14 new trees; and
- improved habitat connectivity.
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The approved BNG calculation identifies a **13.47% increase in habitat units** and a **96.45% increase in hedgerow units**.

Implementation of this HMMP will provide the management and monitoring framework necessary to maintain those biodiversity gains over the required 30-year period.