

BLADE

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT INCLUDING BASELINE AND POST-DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

LAND EAST OF STOKE ROAD AND NORTH OF
NORMANDY WAY (A47),
HINCKLEY, LEICESTERSHIRE

ON BEHALF OF

VISTRY GROUP

MARCH 2026

V1

BIODIVERSITY
LANDSCAPE
ARBORICULTURE
DESIGN
ECOLOGY

Report Data	
Title	Biodiversity Net Gain Report, including Baseline and Post-development Assessment
Site Address	land East of Stoke Road and North of Normandy Way (A47), Hinckley, Leicestershire
Client	Vistry Group
BLADE Reference	172-E-RP-PL-2082BNG

Version	Author	Reviewer	Date Issued
V1	A. Elliot BSc (Hons) ACIEEM	E. Seaton BSc (Hons) MCIEEM	16 May 2022
V2	I. Moorton MSc	E. Seaton BSc (Hons) MCIEEM	20 March 2026

Disclosure:

This document has been prepared by BLADE Ecology Ltd. for the sole use of the commissioning client/s. It has been provided in accordance with the agreed scope and intended purpose. No other warranty is made as to the professional advice included in this document. It does not purport to give legal advice.

This report should not be copied or relied upon by any third party without the express prior written agreement of BLADE Ecology Ltd. and the commissioning client/s.

Where any appraisal is based upon information provided by third parties, it is assumed that this information is relevant, correct and complete; there has been no independent verification of information obtained from third parties unless otherwise stated. Where field investigations have been carried out these have been appropriate to the agreed scope of works and carried out to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives.



CONTENTS

1.0	Executive Summary	4
2.0	Introduction.....	5
	Background to the Development.....	5
	Previous Survey Work and Ecological Baseline.....	6
	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Objectives.....	6
3.0	Biodiversity Net Gain and Planning Policy	7
	Biodiversity Net Gain.....	7
	National Planning Policy.....	9
	Legislation	12
4.0	Methodology	13
	Condition Assessments	13
	Desk Study and Strategic Significance.....	13
	Measurement of Habitat and Hedgerow Units.....	13
	Calculating Biodiversity Units.....	14
5.0	Results	15
	Strategic Significance	15
	Existing On-site Habitats and Hedgerows.....	15
	Post-development On-site Habitats and Hedgerows	17
	Biodiversity Unit Calculations	18
6.0	References	20

APPENDIX A Plans

APPENDIX B Condition Assessments

APPENDIX C Qualifications and Experience

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline Assessment was undertaken of the land East of Stoke Road and North of Normandy Way (A47), Hinckley, Leicestershire on 9 May 2022. The survey was completed by A. Elliott BSc (Hons) ACIEEM in accordance with the 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide' and 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments' documents (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2024).
- 1.2 This was undertaken to support the outline application for '*planning permission for up to 475 dwellings, including public open space, land reserved for a primary school together with future expansion land (use class F1 (a)), drainage, landscaping and associated infrastructure*'.
- 1.3 The site is approximately 22.78ha in area and comprises five separate fields subject to cattle grazing with a further parcel of land located to the west of Stoke Road surrounded by mixture of native species-rich and species-poor hedgerows. The site is formed from 55.10 habitat and 61.34 hedgerow units.
- 1.4 The application Ref 22/00318/OUT, dated 31 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 May 2023. The scheme was then subsequently granted at appeal on 18 January 2024 (see Appeal Ref: APP/K2420/W/23/3323113). The following condition was placed on the consent:

Condition 25

No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme that demonstrates a Biodiversity Metric 3.1 calculation achieving a minimum 25% net gain in area habitat value has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

- 1.5 The Biodiversity Net Gain has been updated based on the following plans produced by BLADE Landscape Architects (ref 1896-L-D-PL-201/2/3-V1) dated October 2025. An area has been designated as a school safeguarding area (2ha) and removed from the redline. The area of grassland within the site has also been reduced.
- 1.6 All assumptions have been taken from the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 guidance at the time in combination with the original approved approach at outline for consistency in comparison e.g. condition assessment targets, tree sizes etc.
- 1.7 An assessment of the updated plan indicates that achieving a +25% net gain in habitat and hedgerow units and meeting the trading rules on-site will be achievable.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Background to the Development

- 2.1 BLADE Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Vistry Group to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the land east of Stoke Road and north of Normandy Way (A47), Hinckley, Leicestershire (centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SP 420 956).
- 2.2 The site is approximately 22.78ha in area and comprises five separate fields subject to cattle grazing with a further parcel of land located to the west of Stoke Road surrounded by mixture of native species-rich and species-poor hedgerows.
- 2.3 The area of land which was previously used as a school safeguarding area (2ha) has since been removed from inside the redline, as well as the area of hardstanding to the west of the site, which has resulted in the eastern and western parcel of land being separated. The area of grassland within the site has also been reduced.
- 2.4 The application site boundary is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Application Site Boundary

- 2.5 The application Ref 22/00318/OUT, dated 31 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 May 2023. The scheme was then subsequently granted at appeal on 18 January 2024 (see Appeal Ref: APP/K2420/W/23/3323113). The following condition was placed on the consent:

Condition 25

No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme that demonstrates a Biodiversity Metric 3.1 calculation achieving a minimum 25% net gain in area habitat value has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Previous Survey Work and Ecological Baseline

- 2.6 This Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline has been informed by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken for the site by Zebra Ecology Ltd (now BLADE Ecology Ltd) during November and December 2021.
- 2.7 These habitats were used to inform the baseline units within the calculator. Habitats are mapped with the UK Habitat Classification Plan in Appendix A.
- 2.8 All assumptions have been taken from the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 guidance at the time in combination with the original approved approach at outline for consistency in comparison e.g. condition assessment targets, tree sizes etc.

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Objectives

- 2.9 The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Classify the type, distinctiveness, condition and strategic significance of existing and post-development habitats, and hedgerows.
 - Recalculate the baseline value of the existing habitats and hedgerows present on site.
 - Calculate the post-development value of the proposed habitats and hedgerows based on the updated layout / landscape plan.

3.0 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN AND PLANNING POLICY

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is defined as 'development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, and an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support their priorities for nature conservation'.
- 3.2 In 2016, the BNG: Good practice principles for development was published to support developments across the UK achieve BNG in accordance with good practice. These principles aimed to set a benchmark of 'what good looks like' and they include the mitigation hierarchy and avoiding impacts of irreplaceable habitats. In 2019, the principles were supplemented with practical guidance on designing, implementing and the long-term maintenance and monitoring of BNG through the project lifecycle.
- 3.3 Good practice principles for biodiversity net gain are set out within Table 1.1 of Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development (Baker et al., 2019):

Table 1: The UK's good practice principles for biodiversity net gain (after Baker, 2016)

Principle	In Practice
Apply the mitigation hierarchy	Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses with the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.
Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere	Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity – these impacts cannot be offset to achieve no net loss / net gain.
Be inclusive and equitable	Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to net gain. Achieve net gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible.
Address risk	Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving net gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.
Make a measurable net gain contribution	Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.
Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity	Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly justified choices when:

Principle	In Practice
	- delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses - compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity offsetting by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation - achieving net gain locally to the development whilst also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional, and national levels. - enhancing existing or creating new habitat - enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity.
Be additional	Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway
Create a net gain legacy	Ensure net gain generates long-term benefits by: - engaging stakeholders- and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure Net Gain in perpetuity - planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management - designing net gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change - mitigating risks from other land uses - avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another - supporting local-level management of net gain activities
Optimise sustainability	Prioritise BNG and, where possible, optimise the wider environment benefits for sustainable society and economy
Be transparent	Communicate all net gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government) provides guidance for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in creating development plans and determining applications.

Paragraph 8

- 3.5 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 33

- 3.6 Local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements. This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains). Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered).

Paragraph 151

- 3.7 Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

Paragraph 187

- 3.8 Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Paragraph 188

- 3.9 Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental value or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Paragraph 189

- 3.10 Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Paragraph 190

- 3.11 When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
 - b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

Paragraph 191

- 3.12 Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 189), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

Paragraph 192

- 3.13 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraph 193

- 3.14 When determining planning authorities should apply the following principles:
- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in

combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Paragraph 194

3.15 The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Paragraph 195

3.16 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Legislation

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitats and Species

3.17 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (HMSO 1995, 1998; UKBAP 2007) lists species and habitats which have undergone significant declines in recent years and for which conservation is a priority in order to preserve biodiversity in the UK. The BAPs provide a list of actions to be implemented to halt or reverse these declines. These species and habitats are identified as Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Section 40 of the NERC Act, planning policy and underpinning guidance (ODPM, 2005)

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Condition Assessments

- 4.1 Condition assessments were completed on 9 May 2022. Habitat condition was assigned following guidance from the 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide' and 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments' documents (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2024) to be read in conjunction with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric 3.1. The condition of each broad habitat type was assessed following this guidance. Full details of condition assessments completed can be seen in Appendix C.
- 4.2 Botanical quadrat data was collected in randomly selected locations to assess average species per m².

Desk Study and Strategic Significance

- 4.3 Strategic significance is used to assess the value of a habitat in relation to its spatial location using published local strategies and objectives for improving biodiversity, as per the guidance of the 'User Guide' document (Natural England, 2023).
- 4.4 The following LNRS was used for determining the strategic significance of habitats:
- Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy & Local Habitat Map.

Measurement of Habitat and Hedgerow Units

- 4.5 Baseline habitat parcels were measured using habitat mapping and aerial imagery overlain in QGIS. A minimum mapping unit of 25m² and 5 linear metres was implemented.
- 4.6 Post-development habitats were calculated by the measurements provided by Richborough.
- 4.7 Survey units for hedgerows have been recorded in line with the Hedgerow Survey Handbook, 2007:
- 'An end point, or node, is:
 - any point or connection between two, or more, hedgerows to other features e.g. fences, walls, ditches, roads.
 - the point at which a hedgerow stops and there is a gap of more than 20m to the next hedgerow (e.g. where the hedgerow ends in the middle of a field).
 - the point at which the hedgerow links to a woodland or other semi-natural habitat such as a pond.

- There may be significant variation along this length that may require refining lengths into 'survey units'. These additional points where changes occur as follows:
 - the point at which the hedgerow changes character from one hedgerow type to another for 20m or more.
 - where there is a distinct change in hedgerow height for lengths of 20m or more.
 - the ends of lengths (20m or more) of recent planting, coppicing or laying'.

Calculating Biodiversity Units

- 4.8 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool. was used to calculate the baseline (habitat and hedgerow units). Metric calculations have been undertaken by A. Elliot BSc (Hons) ACIEEM and I. Moorton MSc.

5.0 RESULTS

Strategic Significance

- 5.1 Habitats have been assessed for strategic significance in relation to its spatial location using the published Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy & Local Habitat Map.
- 5.2 The local habitat map identifies existing Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) and Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB), with the associated priorities and measures for these habitats (i.e. Woodland, Grassland, Freshwater Urban, geodiversity & Nature network measures) listed. There are no habitats either on-site or within proximity of the site which are mapped under any of these existing categories.
- 5.3 The LNRS also includes a separate section for mapping priority species (fauna and rare vascular plants and lichens), none of these species assemblages are identified on-site or within proximity of the site.
- 5.4 Taking the above into account, all habitats on-site have been classed as low strategic significance 'Area/ compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy'.

Existing On-site Habitats and Hedgerows

- 5.5 A summary of baseline condition assessments has been provided below. Full condition assessments can be seen in Appendix C. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal should be referred to for full habitat descriptions.

Arable

- 5.6 An area (1.41ha) of land utilised for arable purposes (cereal crops) is located to the west of Stoke Road. This is a low distinctiveness habitat with condition assessments not applicable.

Grassland

- 5.7 All grassland fields have been categorised as low distinctiveness 'modified grassland' as <9 species per m² were recorded. The fields have previously been utilised as arable land (information attained from Google aerials). They have now been put back to grass and are subject to cattle grazing. The vegetation is dominated by fast-growing grasses (e.g. perennial ryegrass) on neutral soils. Grass cover is high forming >90% of the sward.
- 5.8 Broadleaved species are restricted to include dandelion *Taraxacum* sp., white clover *Trifolium repens*, field speedwell *Veronica persica*, shepherd's purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, broadleaved plantain *Plantago major*, common groundsel *Senecio vulgaris* and common chickweed *Stellaria media*.

- 5.9 Botanical quadrat data was collected in randomly selected locations of each field on 9 May 2022 to assess average species per m². This did not average 6 or more species in any of the fields. The grassland has therefore been classified as being in 'fairly poor' condition as 6-8 species per m² is an essential criterion to achieve 'moderate' condition. As a small number of quadrats supported over 6 species per m² within F1 and F2, the grassland has been classified as 'fairly poor', rather than 'poor' as a precaution within these areas.
- 5.10 The sward height is uniform (c.150mm in height), absent of scrub with physical damage (e.g. by excessive poaching) noted in less than 5% of the grassland area. There is an absence of invasive non-native species as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.
- 5.11 Field 5 has been separated into sections due to large size and notable change in condition.

Scrub

- 5.12 A small area (0.2ha) of medium distinctiveness bramble scrub is present at the southern end of Hedgerow 6 (H6). Condition assessments not applicable for this habitat.

Hedgerows

- 5.13 A total of twelve hedgerows are present on-site. Four (H1-H3) have been classified as native species rich hedgerow with trees – associated with bank or ditch and therefore hold very high distinctiveness. Four hedgerows (H4-H7) fall under native species rich hedgerow with trees holding high distinctiveness. Two native species-rich hedgerows (H8 and H10) and a single native hedgerow with trees (H12) hold medium distinctiveness. A native hedgerow (H9) and line of trees (H13) hold low distinctiveness.
- 5.14 The majority of hedgerows (excluding H8, H9 and H12) are over 1.5m in height. None of the hedgerows are associated with a >1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for 90% of length due to grazing. Undesirable species such as nettles *Urtica* spp., cleavers *Galium aparine* and docks *Rumex* spp.) exceeds >20% cover of undisturbed ground. All hedgerows (excluding H1, H2 and H13) have been subject to damage through intense felling.

Table 5: Hedgerow Descriptions and Conditions

Hedgerow	Description	Distinctiveness	Condition
H1	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees – associated with a bank or ditch	Very High	Good
H2	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees – associated with a bank or ditch	Very High	Good
H3	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees – associated with a bank or ditch	Very High	Moderate
H4	Native hedgerow with trees	Medium	Moderate

Hedgerow	Description	Distinctiveness	Condition
H5	Native hedgerow with trees	Medium	Moderate
H6	Native hedgerow with trees	Medium	Moderate
H7	Native hedgerow with trees	Medium	Moderate
H8	Species-rich Native hedgerow	Medium	Moderate
H9	Native hedgerow	Low	Moderate
H10	Species-rich Native hedgerow	Medium	Moderate
H12	Native hedgerow with trees	Medium	Moderate
H13	Line of trees	Low	Good

Ponds

- 5.15 Two non-priority ponds (P1 and P2) are present on-site. Both ponds held low water levels (c.200mm in depth) with an absence of pipework allowing water levels to fluctuate naturally throughout the year. Both ponds are located in depressions surrounded by trees. Pond 1 is turbid and not directly grazed by livestock due to the presence of fencing, whilst Pond 2 was noted to hold clear water.

Table 6: Pond Type and Condition

Pond	Description	Distinctiveness	Condition
P1	Woodland Pond (non-priority habitat)	Medium	Moderate
P2	Woodland Pond (non-priority habitat)	Medium	Good

River Tweed

- 5.16 The River Tweed runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

Urban

- 5.17 All remaining areas are categorised as developed land; sealed surface, including a new roundabout to access the site, electricity switching station, residential dwellings and the associated urban infrastructure. Condition assessments are not required for this habitat type.

Post-development On-site Habitats and Hedgerows

- 5.18 Based on the detailed landscape plans prepared by BLADE Landscape Architects (ref 1896-L-D-PL-201/2/3-V1) dated October 2025. This strategy includes the following features:

- Four attenuation basins to be planted with a wet tolerant grassland mix (i.e. Emorsgate EM8 wetland mix). Basins will not be permanently wet and will be managed as a poor condition neutral grassland (other neutral grassland).
- The existing ponds (P1 & P2) are to be retained.
- Planting of 957 small trees, with the majority managed in moderate condition. The trees located on the other-neutral grassland verges (83 in total) will be targeting poor condition.
- Six bioswales to be created across the site and designed to achieve moderate condition.
- 4.25ha Species-rich (minimum 10 species per m²) wildflower meadow areas (i.e. Emorsgate EM3 species-rich grassland) / strips to be created across the site and managed in a moderate condition. There is an additional area (1.04ha) of wildflower meadow area within the western parcel of land which will be managed in a fairly good condition.
- 1.13ha of front vegetated gardens and 3.640ha of rear vegetated gardens. Condition Assessment N/A
- 0.254ha of Species-rich (minimum 10 species per m²) wildflower meadow to be created along the road verges, these areas will be managed in poor condition.
- 0.775ha of mixed scrub will be planted around perimeters of the site, this will be managed in moderate condition.
- 0.016ha of grasscrete to be created, this has been separated into 0.008ha of bare ground, managed to poor condition, and developed land where condition assessments are not required.
- Five play areas to be created across the site (0.18ha), categorised as artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface. Condition assessments are not required for this habitat type. The associated other-neutral grassland (0.318ha) surrounding these areas will be managed in poor condition.

Biodiversity Unit Calculations

5.19 The site is formed from 55.10 habitat and 61.34 hedgerow units.

Table 7: Habitat Biodiversity Impact

Factor	Units
Baseline units	50.10
Post-intervention biodiversity units	61.34
Total net unit change	11.24

Total net % change	25.28%
Trading Rule Satisfied	Yes

Table 8: Hedgerow Biodiversity Impact

Factor	Units
Baseline units	61.34
Post-intervention biodiversity units	82.78
Total net unit change	21.44
Total net % change	34.96 %
Trading Rule Satisfied	Yes

- 5.20 Based on the above, achieving +25% net gain in habitat and hedgerow units will be feasible on-site.

6.0 REFERENCES

Baker, J., Beatty, B., Hoskin, R., Footprint Ecology, Butterworth, T., WSP (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain. Good Practice Principles for Development – A Practical Guide*. CIRIA, London, UK.

BLADE Ecology (2022). *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including 2km third-party data search) – Land East of Stoke Road and North of Normandy Way (A47), Hinckley, Leicestershire*. BLADE Ecology Ltd., Worcester, UK.

CIEEM (2017a). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.

CIEEM (2017b). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.

CIEEM (2018). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2024). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide*. Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, UK. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides> [Accessed March 2026]

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2024). *Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments*. Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, UK. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides> [Accessed March 2026]

MAGIC (2021) *Interactive Map*. Available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> [Accessed March 2026]

National Planning Policy Framework (2024) Department for Communities and Local Government, UK.

UK Habitat Ltd. (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*. <https://ukhab.org> [Accessed March 2026]

APPENDIX A

Plans

UK Habitat Classification Survey Plan

Post-Development Habitats Plan



Contains OS data © Crown copyright (2024).
© OpenStreetMap contributors.

BLADE Ecology Limited registered in England and Wales.
Registered office: 30 St. Georges Square,
Worcester, WR1 1HX.
Registered number: 13084460.

Copyright is vested with BLADE Ecology Limited and must not be copied, or reproduced without the consent. Do not scale from this drawing, figured dimensions only to be used.

Key

Red Line Boundary

HEDGEROWS

Native hedgerow

Species-rich native hedgerow

HABITATS

Bramble scrub

Cereal crops

Modified grassland

Ponds (non-priority habitat)

Watercourse footprint

Target Note 1: Rubble Pile



30 St. Georges Square, Worcester, WR1 1HX 01905 947 558 www.weareblade.co.uk	
CLIENT Vistry Group	
PROJECT Stoke Road/ Normandy Way, Hinckley	
DRAWING TITLE UK Habitat Classification Plan	
DRAWING STATUS Planning	
DRAWING NO. 172-E-RP-PL-BNG	REVISION V1
SCALE @ A4 1:3,800	DATE MAR 2026

APPENDIX B

Condition Assessments

Table 9: Grassland – Low Distinctiveness. Condition Assessment Criteria

Condition Assessment Criteria		
A	There must be 6-8 species per m² present, including at least two forbs (this 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 of these characteristic species present (excluding those in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland.	
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is <7 cm and at least 20% is >7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble fruticosus agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	
D	Physical damage 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.	
E	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens, see Footnote 2).	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (Footnote 3; as listed on Schedule 9 WCA, 1981).	
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>C. vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>R. 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 species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.		
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including essential criterion A		Good
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including essential criterion A.		Moderate
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4-6 criteria (excluding criterion A)		Poor

Table 10: Grassland – Low Distinctiveness. Assessment Results

Parcel	Criteria							Score
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
Field 2 – Field 5 (modified grassland). Twenty-one quadrats were assessed randomly within the fields. Average of 5 species recorded.	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Poor

NOTE: occasional quadrats were recorded to support >5 species per m² within Fields 1 & 2 but averaged <6 species per m². As a precautionary approach, these fields have been classified to be in 'fairly poor' condition.

Table 11: Pond Condition Assessment Criteria

Condition Assessment Criteria	
A	The pond is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution. Turbidity is acceptable if the pond is grazed by livestock.
B	There is semi-natural habitat (moderate distinctiveness or above) for ≥ 10 m from the pond edge for its entire perimeter.
C	<10% of the water surface is covered with duckweed or filamentous algae.
D	The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies, e.g. agricultural ditches or artificial pipework.
E	Pond water levels can fluctuate naturally throughout the year. No obvious dams, pumps or pipework.
F	There is an absence of listed non-native plant and animal species.
G	The pond is not artificially stocked with fish. If the pond naturally contains fish, it is a native fish assemblage at low densities.
Additional criteria only applicable to non-woodland ponds	
H	Emergent, submerged or floating plants (excluding duckweeds) cover $\geq 50\%$ of the pond area which is <3 m deep.
I	The pond surface is $\leq 50\%$ shaded by adjacent trees and scrub.
Condition Assessment Result for woodland ponds	
Condition Assessment Score	
Passes 7 of 7 criteria	Good
Passes 5 to 6 criteria	Moderate
Passes 4 or fewer criteria	Poor

Condition Assessment Result for non-woodland ponds	Condition Assessment Score
Passes 9 of 9 criteria	Good
Passes 6 to 8 criteria	Moderate
Passes 5 or fewer criteria	Poor

Table 7: Pond. Assessment Results

Pond	Criteria									Score
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
P1	F	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A		Moderate
P2	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A		Good

APPENDIX C

Qualifications and Experience

BLADE Ecology Ltd is Registered Practice of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). A comprehensive range of ecological services are offered including Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) and European Protected Species (EPS) Surveys / Licensing.

The practice works closely work closely with clients to achieve their aspirations alongside securing the best outcomes for the environment. With wildlife legislation and policy as its basis; commercial awareness, pragmatism and defensible advice is combined to form BLADE Ecology's approach.

As well as offering a wide range of ecological services, BLADE Ecology offers an in-house collaborative approach in conjunction with BLADE Landscape Architects and BLADE Trees.

Andrew Elliott BSc (Hons)

Andy holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Biological Sciences (Zoology) from the University of Birmingham, and has a particular passion for ornithology, as well as social ecology. After graduating, Andy spent time in Southern Africa contributing to research projects in fields such as evolutionary sociality in birds, black rhinoceros behavioural ecology and linear infrastructure wildlife-mortality mitigation. Andy holds a Class 1 survey licence for bats and great crested newts, and has a broad range of consulting experience, working on large and small-scale projects across the UK. Andy is a published author in the Journal of Ethology and is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Izzy Moorton BSc (Hons) MSc

Izzy joined BLADE Ecology in 2025 as a Seasonal Ecologist. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Zoology from Aberystwyth University and an MSc in Global Conservation Science from The University of Leeds. She also has experience carrying out ecological research in the Lake District National Park within woodland and moorland habitats, as well as previously contributing to conservation efforts in Canada by interning in wildlife rehabilitation. Izzy is a qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Emma Seaton BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

Emma holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Biology from the University of Sheffield and has since gained a postgraduate certificate in Ecological Consultancy. Her ecological experience includes Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA), surveying for notable / European Protected Species, mitigation / licensing advice and providing Continued Professional Development (CPD) sessions for developers on Biodiversity Net Gain. She has held Natural England survey licences for bats (Class 2), great crested newts and white-clawed crayfish since 2015. She is also a Registered Consultant under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) licence and Earned Recognition consultant under the Natural England bat pilot project. Emma is a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

30 ST GEORGES SQUARE
WORCESTER
WR1 1HX

01905 947558
info@weareblade.co.uk
www.weareblade.co.uk

BLADE Ecology Ltd. Registered in England and Wales Number 13084460. VAT 384 3366 75.
BLADE Landscape Architects Ltd. Registered in England and Wales Number 11068394. VAT 288 9595 14.
BLADE Trees Ltd. Registered in England and Wales Number 13385589. VAT 387 2462 66.
Registered Office: 30 St Georges Square, Worcester, WR1 1HX.