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VERSION RECORD

Version:	Date:	Details:	Author(s):	Reviewed By:	Authorised By:
1	16/04/25	Original version	Ariana Segura Ecologist	Alanna Cooper Principal Ecologist	Katie Linehan Technical Director of Ecology

Executive Summary

Report Description	This biodiversity net gain assessment report has been prepared by Geosphere Environmental Limited for NHS Property Services Ltd and relates to the proposed hospital development of the site at Hinckley & District Hospital, Phase 2, Mount Road, Hinckley, LE10 1AG. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the final design for the planning application submission and include a review of recommended measures to secure compensation and enhancement.
Outcome of BNG Assessment	The proposed development will require offsite biodiversity units to achieve the targeted net gain of biodiversity. Options are provided in this report for the development to achieve the targeted biodiversity net gain. The onsite total net unit change is -1.19 area habitat units (-64.18% change) and -0.04 hedgerow habitat units (-33.05%) change. Trading rule issues include a deficit in individual trees of medium distinctiveness.
Recommendations	A no net loss of biodiversity must be achieved before biodiversity net gain can be considered, and to do this all trading rules must first be satisfied. To achieve a no net loss of biodiversity, 1.05 habitat units for individual trees of medium distinctiveness are required to satisfy trading rules. To achieve the targeted 10% biodiversity net gain, an additional 0.33 habitat units attributable to any habitat of low or higher distinctiveness and 0.05 hedgerow units attributable to any hedgerow of low or higher distinctiveness is required. It is understood that the developer is committed to achieving the targeted biodiversity net gain for this site, so it is anticipated this can be delivered via a biodiversity gain plan secured by planning condition.
Conclusions	Provided the recommendations within this report are followed and the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, compensation, and enhancement is implemented throughout the detailed design process, potential negative effects from development on important ecological features will be negligible and the scheme will achieve a significant net gain in biodiversity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This biodiversity net gain assessment report has been prepared by Geosphere Environmental Limited for NHS Property Services Ltd and relates to the proposed hospital redevelopment of the site at Hinckley & District Hospital, Phase 2, Mount Road, Hinckley, LE10 1AG for which detailed planning permission will be sought.

The purpose of this report is to carry out a biodiversity net gain assessment using the statutory biodiversity metric (ref. **R.1**) to evaluate the final design for the planning application submission and include a review of recommended measures to secure compensation and enhancement.

Any limitations and conditions pertaining to the report are stated within Appendix 1, with a full list of technical references provided within Appendix 2.

1.2 Site Description

The site occupies an area of approximately 0.48 ha and is located around National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 42950 93719. The indicative development boundary is shown on Figure 1 below:



Figure 1 – Indicative Site Boundary

1.3 Proposed Development

The report relates to proposed hospital redevelopment of the site as shown in Drawing ref. PLANT168-ZZ-XX-DR-L-101-P04 included within Appendix 3.

The proposed development largely consists of the demolition of the current building onsite and the development of a new 79m² building and surrounding hardstanding. Car parking is proposed to the north including an ambulance drop off zone and ramps for accessibility leading to the property. Landscaping is largely confined to the southwest and includes maintaining some existing trees and some new planting.

2. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Current UK Legislation

The Environment Act 2021 Act became law on 9 November 2021 and introduces a framework to improve and protect the natural environment, overseen by the newly created Office for Environmental Protection. The Act introduces new statutory requirements, including the duty for local authorities to create new local nature recovery strategies. The Act also introduces a mandatory requirement for developments to achieve measurable biodiversity net gain, meaning all planning permissions in England (subject to exemptions) must be granted subject to a general pre-commencement condition that requires approval of a biodiversity gain plan. The planning authority may only approve the biodiversity gain plan if the biodiversity value attributable to a development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat by 10%.

For phased development, an overall biodiversity gain plan must be submitted to and approved by the planning authority before any development can be begun, and a phase biodiversity gain plan for each phase must be submitted to and approved by the planning authority before the development of that phase can be begun.

The reader is referred to the original legislation for definitive interpretation.

2.2 Planning Policy

The recommendations of this report are in line with the key principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (ref. **R.2**) and Government Circular 05/06: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (ref. **R.3**).

A site and / or habitat has strategic significance if it is published in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), or where this is not available, alternative documents for assigning strategic significance. A LNRS is not yet available for Leicestershire County Council. The council is currently in the stage of approving the final LNRS which is targeted for publication in July 2025 (ref. **R.4**), so in this instance no review of sites with strategic significance is included in this assessment.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Technical Approach

This report is prepared in accordance with the best practice guidelines set out by CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA and BSi (refs. **R.5** and **R.6**). The biodiversity net gain assessment is quantified using the statutory biodiversity metric (ref. **R.1**). The conclusions and recommendations for further works are in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

3.2 Personnel

This report was produced by Ariana Segura BSc (Hons) MSc qualifying member of CIEEM (Ecologist), who is experienced in ecological consultancy including biodiversity net gain assessments. This report was reviewed by Alanna Cooper BSc (Hons) CEnv CSci C.WEM MCIEEM MCIWEM (Principal Ecologist) and approved by Katie Linehan BSc (Hons) MSc PIEMA MCIEEM (Technical Director), who are experienced in ecological consultancy including the production of detailed ecological impact assessments, biodiversity net gain assessments and plans, and habitat enhancement and management plans.

3.3 Habitat Survey and Condition Assessment

The preliminary ecological appraisal (ref. **R.7**) identified the habitats present onsite. Habitats were assessed in accordance with the UK Habitats Classification (ref. **R.8**) to be used within the statutory biodiversity metric.

3.3.1 Habitat Classification Survey

Habitat classification was carried out in accordance with methodology required to establish UK Habitat Classification types (ref. **R.8**) aiming to record to level 4, ensuring habitats were recorded to at least level 3 where it was not possible to record to level 4.

The frequency and cover of each species identified as they are distributed in each habitat is estimated using percentage cover.

3.3.2 Habitat Condition Assessment

The biodiversity net gain assessment is carried out retrospectively and is based upon the descriptions of the habitats in the PEA report only. As such, a conservative approach has been taken to the assessment of

the conditions of habitats considering the methodology outlined in the Technical Annex 1 for the statutory biodiversity metric (ref. **R.1**) and all onsite habitats are assumed to be in good condition.

3.4 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

The biodiversity net gain assessment is quantified using the statutory biodiversity metric (ref. **R.1**). The statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool (.xlsx spreadsheet) has been completed using parameters obtained using the below methodology, and this has been submitted alongside this report and is available upon request for review as required.

The results of the habitat classification, condition assessment and habitat mapping using GIS were input into the calculation tool.

The habitats within the proposed development are shown on the Detailed Planting Plan, Drawing ref. PLANT168-ZZ-XX-DR-L-101-P04 included within Appendix 3. Calculated areas of habitats were provided by the client. Habitat categories were assigned to the most rational category based upon the statutory biodiversity metric (ref. **R.1**). Future conditions of habitats were assumed based upon professional judgement.

Where current deficits in biodiversity units are identified, options to achieve no net loss whilst satisfying trading rules and implementing the mitigation hierarchy are recommended in accordance with the best practice guidance (refs. **R.3** and **R.5**).

The information provided in this report includes the minimum information required for submission of a planning application, as set out in Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, As set out in the published guidance (ref. **R.9**).

3.5 Limitations

The habitat survey was conducted outside of the optimal time of year for botanical assessments. As such, conservative measures were undertaken for the habitat condition assessment.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the evidence is sufficiently robust to meet the purpose of the survey.

4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

4.1 Minimum Requirements for a Planning Application

The results of this biodiversity net gain assessment include the minimum information required for a planning application, where a development is subject to the general biodiversity gain condition, as set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Minimum Required Information for the Application

Statement of applicability of biodiversity gain condition.	This development will be subject to the biodiversity gain condition if planning permission is granted.
Pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on the date of the application.	The pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat is summarised in Table 3 below, and the completed version of the metric tool used to show calculations, the publication date and the version of the biodiversity metric use to calculate that value, has been submitted alongside this report, version 8420,EC,BNGP,AS,AC,KL,16-04-25,V1.
Where the application wishes to use an earlier date, the proposed earlier date and the reasons for proposing that date.	The baseline habitats at the time of application are considered to be the onsite same as at the time of the survey, described in Section 3.3 above.
A description of any irreplaceable habitat on the land to which the application relates, that exists on the date of application, (or an earlier date).	The site does not include any irreplaceable habitats.
A plan, drawn to an identified scale which must show the direction of north, showing onsite habitat existing on the date of application (or an earlier date), including any irreplaceable habitat.	A plan of the onsite habitats is included in Drawing ref. 8420,EC/001/Rev0 included within Appendix 3.

4.2 Baseline Habitats

The habitats recorded within the survey area include:

- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.
- Developed land; sealed surface.
- Individual trees.
- Introduced shrub.
- Modified grassland.
- Native hedgerow.

The extent of the habitats onsite is illustrated on the Habitat Plan, Drawing ref. 8420,EC/001/Rev1 included within Appendix 3.

The baseline trees within the site boundary are summarised in Table 2 overleaf:

Table 2 – Baseline Trees

Tree Size	Condition	Number of Baseline Trees	Number of Retained Trees
Small	Moderate	2	1
Medium	Moderate	6	2
	Good	1	0
Large	Good	1	0
Total		10	3

Habitats outside of the site boundary are not affected by this net gain assessment; and therefore, are not considered further in this report.

4.3 Proposed Habitats

The post-intervention value is based upon the current design. The target habitat conditions are based upon professional opinion of what is achievable with the positive management. The resulting biodiversity units is detailed in the completed statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool. The extent of habitats are assumed to be consistent with the measured areas provided by the landscape architect.

This is based upon assuming that:

- The loss of two individual trees (referenced G7-1 and G7-2 in Drawing ref. 8420,EC/001/Rev1) that sit within the portion of the red line boundary also within the Phase 1 scheme are to be counted within the phase 2 scheme (and were not included in the BNG calculations for the phase 1 scheme) and therefore, are included within the current schemes baseline value.
- The hedgerow to be planted for the proposed development will be hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) species and meet the criteria for native hedgerow targeting moderate condition.
- The grassland to be created for the proposed development will meet the criteria for other neutral grassland in moderate condition.
- The trees to be planted for the proposed development will meet the criteria for moderate condition as they will be planted within areas of semi-natural vegetation.

4.4 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Table 3 overleaf, shows the headline results of the biodiversity net gain assessment:

Table 3 – Onsite Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Summary of Results

Onsite baseline.	Habitat units.	1.86
	Hedgerow units.	0.11
Onsite post-intervention.	Habitat units.	0.67
	Hedgerow units.	0.07
Onsite total net unit change.	Habitat units.	-1.19
	Hedgerow units.	-0.04
Onsite net % change.	Habitat units.	-64.18%
	Hedgerow units.	-33.05%
Trading rule issues.	Deficit in habitat units for individual trees of medium distinctiveness.	-1.05

4.4.1 Area-Based Habitats

The baseline sum of biodiversity units onsite considering area-based habitats is 1.86 habitat units. Post-development in the current scenario, the development would provide 0.67 habitat units, in other words a net loss of -1.19 habitat units (-64.18%). There is a trading rule issue for the loss of individual trees of 1.05 units. This means that 1.05 biodiversity units attributable to trees of medium distinctiveness, or any habitat of high or very high distinctiveness, is required to achieve no net loss of biodiversity.

4.4.2 Hedgerow Habitats

The baseline sum of biodiversity units onsite considering hedgerow (linear) habitats is 0.11 units. Post-development in the current scenario, the development would provide 0.07 units, in other words a net loss of 0.04 hedgerow units (-33.05%).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Achieving Target Conditions for All Habitats

The habitats proposed within the scheme need to be of a sufficient quality to achieve the conditions as assessed. This will be especially challenging for the amount of other neutral grassland assumed in the final development, which is all the grassland in the areas of open space. Recommendations for the creation and management of these features are summarised in Section 5.5 below.

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) (ref. **R.10**) should be produced to provide detail of the creation and management of the habitats. Any habitat the developer creates with the purpose of achieving either no net loss of biodiversity or a biodiversity net gain, should be managed for a period of not less than 30 years. This should include a requirement for periodic reporting of monitoring, including details of key future actions and adaptive management as required.

5.2 Achieving No Net Loss of Biodiversity

The mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensation must be satisfied before a no net loss of biodiversity can be realised. This includes implementation of any mitigation measures required to ensure there are no significant effects on ecological receptors. Once these key requirements are met, biodiversity net gain can then be considered.

The potential effects identified in the preliminary ecological appraisal report (ref. **R.7**) that may require mitigation include potential effects on roosting bats in the building. Recommendations provided in the report include:

- A completion report of licenced works for the demolition of the building previously found to have a day roost should be provided for consideration within any future bat report and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) comprising a full internal assessment should also be undertaken to assess the condition and quality of internal cavities and void within the build to confirm suitability and inform if any further survey effort is required regarding maternity and hibernation. Additional survey effort to that already stated above, may be required as a result of the roost surveys or detailed PRA.
- A sensitive lighting scheme should be designed in coordination between a qualified lighting engineer and a suitably qualified Ecologist. This should ensure that potential roosting and connective commuting habitat (either retained or created within the development) remains as unlit as possible to allow continued and future use by bats.
- To ensure that no offences occur under the WCA, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance work is undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. If it is not possible to undertake clearance works outside of the breeding bird season, a suitably qualified ecologist should be employed to determine if

nesting birds are using the site prior to works commencing, to avoid negative impact on protected species.

Once a mitigation strategy is agreed, suitable compensation can be considered.

For the area-based habitats onsite, it will not be possible to compensate for the loss of habitat units attributable to individual trees and low distinctiveness habitats onsite. No further space is considered suitable for tree planting and there are no areas where tree planting or the creation of other habitats could be proposed without altering the development scheme considerably. Similarly, there are not considered to be any options for further inclusion of hedgerows in the current layout plans, so the loss of linear habitats cannot be compensated for onsite.

Therefore, in the current scenario, no net loss of biodiversity (and therefore any subsequent biodiversity net gain) can only be achieved by including offsite compensation. The requirements for this are discussed further in the sections below.

5.3 Achieving Biodiversity Net Gain

The principles of additionality are important to apply to measures put in place to achieve a biodiversity net gain.

The preliminary ecological appraisal report (ref **R.7**) recommends the following ecological enhancements are considered for the scheme:

- Planting of native plant species beneficial to wildlife should be incorporated into the final design. This will provide additional habitat for invertebrates, which will in turn provide a food source for reptiles, birds, bats, and hedgehog.
- The final development plan should incorporate integrated bat and bird boxes into the scheme. This will provide additional roosting and nesting habitats for bats and birds post-development. Recommendations for specifications for wildlife boxes are included within the preliminary ecological appraisal report.

Any biodiversity enhancement scheme for the development site should include the above elements.

Options to achieve measurable biodiversity net gain for this project are provided below. The options are examples only and there may be other options depending on what land is available to achieve biodiversity net gain. Any future area to be put forward for offsite compensation will require baseline survey and the development of a detailed habitat creation / enhancement and long-term management plan.

5.3.1 Area Habitats

For area-based habitats, to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain for the project, an additional 1.05 biodiversity units attributable to individual trees (or any other habitat of high or very high distinctiveness) and an additional 0.33 biodiversity units attributable to any habitat of low or higher distinctiveness is required (1.38 biodiversity units in total).

This could be achieved by implementing one of the following options:

- Planting 85 new trees (to satisfy trading rules) and enhancing 0.055 ha of modified grassland in poor condition to other neutral grassland in good condition (this would achieve 10.12% biodiversity net gain for the project).
- Planting 111 new trees in parkland / grassland the local area. This would satisfy trading rules and achieve 10.19% biodiversity net gain for the project.

All sites used for offsite enhancements for area habitats used to prove mandatory biodiversity net gain must be secured by a legal agreement, be subject to a site-specific 30-year habitat management and monitoring plan and be registered on the Natural England Biodiversity Register (ref. **R.13**).

Alternatively, the required biodiversity units could be purchased from an offsite provider.

5.3.2 Linear Habitats

For the linear habitats, to achieve a biodiversity net gain, an additional 0.05 biodiversity units attributable to any hedgerow habitat of low or higher distinctiveness is required.

This could be achieved by implementing one of the following options:

- Planting 0.0142 km of native hedgerow targeting moderate condition. This will achieve 10.16% biodiversity net gain for this this project.
- Planting 0.0071 km of species-rich native hedgerow targeting moderate condition. This will achieve 10.16% biodiversity net gain for this project.

All sites used for offsite enhancements for linear habitats used to prove mandatory biodiversity net gain must be secured by a legal agreement, be subject to a site-specific 30-year habitat management and monitoring plan and be registered on the Natural England Biodiversity Register (ref. **R.13**).

Alternatively, the required biodiversity units could be purchased from an offsite provider.

5.3.3 Offsite Compensation and Consideration of Spatial and Strategic Multipliers

The above options have assumed that the habitat creation / enhancements will be inside the local planning authority (LPA), in this case Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council or inside the National Character Area (NCA) (ref. **R.11**) of the site. The site is within the Leicestershire Vales NCA (ref. **R.12**). If land outside of the boundary of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council or the Leicestershire Vales NCA is put forward for compensation, a spatial multiplier will apply, and additional areas / biodiversity units will be required.

If the local authority is approached in the interim and provides details of an area where offsite compensation can be achieved that are assigned strategic significance via alternative documents in the absence of a current LNRS, the use of strategic multipliers may be considered for the scheme.

5.3.4 Purchase of Biodiversity Units from an Offsite Provider

If the developer does not wish to actively create and manage offsite habitats to achieve a biodiversity net gain, the alternative would be to purchase biodiversity units from an offsite provider such as a land bank or similar. To achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain for this site, the purchase of 1.05 biodiversity units for individual trees or a habitat of higher distinctiveness, 0.33 biodiversity units of any area-based habitat and 0.05 biodiversity units of any linear-based (hedgerow) habitat are required. If the offsite provider is not in the same local authority or NCA, a spatial multiplier will apply (see Section 5.3.3 above).

For the total 1.43 biodiversity units you require, this may cost an estimated £80,557.58 exc. VAT, or possibly more if the habitat bank will not sell fractions of units. This is an estimated price of what the units would cost based on the averages recently published by a biodiversity unit broker for the south (ref. **R.14**), assuming the maximum spatial multipliers but no strategic multipliers will apply to provide a worst-case scenario. Many offsite providers of biodiversity units exist, and it is advised that more than one are consulted to determine if they have units available for this project. This is because the market in biodiversity units is relatively new and site with legal agreements are regularly becoming available. The local authority could also be approached to find out what local schemes they are aware of for the purchase of biodiversity units.

For this scheme, it is assumed the additional biodiversity units required will be purchased from an offsite provider. In this case, the selected offsite biodiversity unit provider should update the biodiversity metric calculator submitted alongside this planning stage report to include all the offsite baseline habitats, offsite created habitats and offsite enhanced habitats. The offsite provider is also usually responsible for recording the biodiversity gains allocated to the site, but this can also be done by the applicant, developer, ecologist or an agent acting on behalf of the applicant. Once the units are purchased and the gains allocated to this site are recorded (ref. **R.15**), the completed metric and the biodiversity gain plan can be submitted to the LPA to discharge the biodiversity gain condition (ref. **R.16**).

5.4 Recommendations to Achieve Target Condition of Proposed Onsite Habitats

Recommendations to achieve the target condition for proposed retained and / or enhanced habitats are included below. These recommendations assume the management of the habitats will take place over a period of 30 years, and the condition will be achieved within the 30-year period of management. A HMMP (ref. **R.10**) should be produced to ensure the habitats onsite are created and managed to the appropriate condition specified within this report, to achieve the condition assumed.

5.4.1 Native Hedgerow

The native hedgerow to be created onsite is targeted to reach a moderate condition. To achieve this, the criteria shown in Table 4 below must be met.

Native species are defined as those listed as native in Stace (ref. **R.17**). Cultivars of native species, or those listed as neonative, archaeophyte or neophyte species, are not native species.

Table 4 – Hedgerow Management Recommendations

Condition Assessment Criteria	How this is Achieved
Functional group A: length and width	
>1.5 m average along width length. The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	Implementation of a HMMP to ensure hedgerows pruned at the correct time of year to a minimum width of 1.5m.
Functional group B: gaps in hedgerow	
Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length. This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth.	Implementation of a HMMP to ensure hedgerows are pruned to avoid creating a gap at the base, and where gaps develop these are interplanted with native species.
Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m. This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	The new hedgerow will be planted to be a continuous hedgerow. The HMMP will be implemented to ensure there are minimal gaps in the canopy.
Functional group C: groundcover vegetation	
Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground. The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence,	The HMMP will avoid application of fertilisers or pesticides and avoid disturbance of ground around the hedgerow that may encourage the colonisation of undesirable species. The HMMP will include an element of monitoring to ensure that if species indicative of

Table 4 – Hedgerow Management Recommendations

Condition Assessment Criteria	How this is Achieved
either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	over-enrichment are identified, appropriate measures to reduce their coverage (for example spot-treatment, cutting and removing cuttings, etc) is implemented should these species spread to cover more than 20% of the undisturbed ground.
Functional group D: invasive species and disturbance	
>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species (introduced since 1500 AD, as listed in Stace (ref. R.17).	The hedgerow will be managed and protected to ensure minimal disruption is caused and invasive non-native species are not present. The HMMP will ensure that if invasive species colonise the site they are removed by a species-specific appropriate methodology.

5.4.2 Other Neutral Grassland

The other neutral grassland to be created onsite is targeted to reach moderate condition. To achieve this, the criteria shown in Table 5 below must be met:

Table 5 – Other Neutral Grassland Management Recommendations

Condition Assessment Criteria	How this is Achieved
The grassland is a good representation of the habitat type it has been identified as, based upon its UKHab description - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches the characteristics of the specific grassland habitat type. Indicator species listed by UKHab for the specific grassland habitat type are consistently present.	The grassland will be planted with an appropriate seed mix including a good proportion of species indicative of other neutral grassland and managed appropriately to achieve a good representation of other neutral grassland. The cutting regime will maximise flower-production and the use of herbicides and pesticides will be prohibited.
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	The grassland will be managed to ensure cover of bare ground remains between 1% and 5%. This will be carried out by monitoring the grassland and intervening by overseeding or preventing access to any areas of significant bare ground to promote recovery of a continuous sward.
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 grassland will be managed by regular cutting (cutting regime to be stipulated by the HMMP), and bracken & scrub will be removed when necessary.

5.4.3 Individual Trees

The trees to be retained will be protected from damage. Site activities will consider the root protection area of all trees as stipulated by an Arboriculturist in accordance with BS 5837 (ref. **R.18**). No site activities including vehicular traffic, use of power-tools or storage of materials will take place within the root-protection area.

Planted trees within the scheme are proposed to achieve a moderate condition. To achieve this, the criteria shown in Table 6 overleaf must be met:

Table 6 – Individual Tree Management Recommendations

Condition Assessment Criteria	How this is Achieved
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).	This is likely to be achieved since the trees will be managed to maintain a continuous canopy.
There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide, or detrimental agricultural activity). Management will ensure the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	The HMMP will be implemented to include intervention measures for trees that develop pests and diseases. Trees will not be managed by grafting, pollarding or coppicing.
More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	The tree will be planted in an area of semi-natural habitat / grassland.

5.4.4 Developed Land; Sealed Surface

There is no habitat requirement for developed land. Further enhancement for fauna can be provided in the form of bird / bat boxes within the buildings. Recommendations for integrated bird / bat boxes are included in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (ref. **R.7**).

5.5 Further Survey and Assessment Required

No further survey and / or assessment is required to finalise the BNG assessment. If required as the design progresses, recalculations of likely biodiversity units may be requested to determine the feasibility of achieving biodiversity net gains at the site.

5.6 Monitoring

A monitoring programme to measure the progress of habitat enhancements selected to take forward should be included in the HMMP.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The site will require offsite biodiversity units to achieve the targeted net gain of biodiversity.

The onsite total net unit change is -1.19 area habitat units (-64.18% change) and -0.04 hedgerow habitat units (-33.05%) change. Trading rule issues include a deficit in individual trees of medium distinctiveness.

To achieve a no net loss of biodiversity, 1.05 habitat units for individual trees of medium distinctiveness, or any habitat of high or very high distinctiveness, are required to satisfy trading rules.

To achieve the targeted 10% biodiversity net gain, an additional 0.33 habitat units and 0.05 hedgerow units attributable to any habitat of low or higher distinctiveness is required.

Options are provided within this report that will achieve a no net loss of biodiversity / 10% net gain in biodiversity for the proposed development site when considering both onsite and offsite habitat creation / enhancements. For this scheme, it is assumed the additional biodiversity units required will be purchased from an offsite provider.

It is understood that the developer is committed to achieving the targeted biodiversity net gain for this site, so it is anticipated this can be delivered via a biodiversity gain plan secured by planning condition.

Provided the recommendations within this report are followed and the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, compensation, and enhancement is implemented throughout the detailed design process, potential negative effects from development on important ecological features will be negligible and the scheme will achieve a significant net gain in biodiversity.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Report Limitations and Conditions

General Limitations and Exceptions

This report was prepared solely for our client for the stated purposes only and is not intended to be relied on by any other party or for any other use. No extended duty of care to any third party is implied or offered. Third parties should not rely on the facts, matters or opinions set out in this report without the express written permission of Geosphere Environmental Ltd.

Geosphere Environmental Ltd does not purport to provide specialist legal advice.

The Executive Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations sections of the report provide an overview and guidance only and should not be specifically relied upon until considered in the context of the whole report.

Interpretations and recommendations contained within the report represent our professional opinions, which were arrived at in accordance with currently accepted industry practices at the time of reporting and based upon current legislation in force at that time.

Ecology Limitations and Exceptions

Any limitations associated with the report will be stated. The consequences of any limitations, findings and / or recommendations in the report are made clear in line with 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, and BSI (2013) BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – 'Code of practice for planning and development'.

This report is prepared and written in the context of the proposals stated in the introduction to this report and should not be used in a differing context.

The wildlife and habitats present on any site are subject to change over time. Surveys of this kind can have limited validity, with the possibility of behaviour patterns and territory boundaries varying over time, due to the dynamics of adjacent populations.

New information, improved practices and legislation may necessitate an alteration to the report in whole or in part after its submission. Therefore, with any change in circumstances or after the expiry of one year from the date of the report, the report should be referred to us for re-assessment and, if necessary, re-appraisal.

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no survey or assessment can ensure the complete characterisation of the natural environment.

Unless stated specifically, drawings and plans are indicative only. As such, the position of features marked on the plans or drawings should not be taken as 100% accurate.

If bats or any other European protected species are found to be present onsite, and the proposed activities will cause disturbance or destruction of a roost site then this report will only summarise the potential requirements. For works to continue a detailed mitigation plan with appropriate compensation measures would be required and a development licence would need to be sought from Natural England.

This survey does not constitute an invasive species survey and should not be treated as such.

Owing to seasonal variances and prevailing weather, conditions may sometimes be sub-optimal for surveying, and this may delay or disrupt planned survey programmes. If applicable, full details are given in the report.

Geosphere Environmental Ltd may not be aware of information that could be held by other organisations or individuals, and it is always possible for features of nature conservation interest to be unrecorded during surveys.

Scientific survey data will be shared with local biological records centre in accordance with the CIEEM professional code of conduct.

Appendix 2 – References

- R.1.** Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. (12 February 2024). Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>
- R.2.** Department for Levelling Up, Housing Communities (20 December 2023) National Planning Policy Framework. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>
- R.3.** ODPM (2005) Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system.
- R.4.** Leicestershire County Council (2025). Local Nature Recovery Strategy. <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/current-progress-of-the-lhrs> [accessed 24 March 2025]
- R.5.** CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA. (2016). Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development. <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Biodiversity-Net-Gain-Principles.pdf>
- R.6.** BSi (2021). Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain – Specification. BS 8683:2021.
- R.7.** Geosphere Environmental Limited (16 April 2025). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Report ref. 9212,EC,FT,TC,KL,PEA,16-04-25,V3.
- R.8.** Butcher, B., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2023) The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 at <http://www.ukhab.org/>
- R.9.** Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (14 February 2024). Biodiversity net gain. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>
- R.10.** Natural England (29 November 2023). Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan Template (JO055). <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5813530037846016>
- R.11.** Natural England (30 September 2014). Corporate Report: National Character Area profiles. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>
- R.12.** Natural England (20 January 2014). NCA Profile: 94 Leicestershire Vales. <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/leicestershire-vales/>

- R.13.** Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. (8 May 2024) Making off-site biodiversity gains as a developer <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-off-site-biodiversity-gains-as-a-developer>
- R.14.** Biodiversity Units UK (11 February 2025). The BNG Pricing Report. <https://biodiversity-units.uk/signup>
- R.15.** Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (15 April 2024). Record allocation of off-site biodiversity gains to a development. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/record-allocation-of-off-site-biodiversity-gains-to-a-development>
- R.16.** Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. (8 May 2024) Making off-site biodiversity gains as a developer <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-off-site-biodiversity-gains-as-a-developer>
- R.17.** Stace, Clive A. (2019). New Flora of the British Isles, Fourth Edition. C&M Floristics, Middlewood Green, Suffolk.
- R.18.** BS 5837: (2012), 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction'.

Appendix 3 – Drawings

Detailed Planting Plan – Drawing ref. PLANT168-ZZ-XX-DR-L-101-P04

Habitat Plan – Drawing ref. 8420,EC/001/Rev1



Legend

- Indicative Site Boundary
- Native Hedgerow
- Modified Grassland
- Introduced Shrub
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Buildings
- Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface
- Individual Trees
 - Small Tree in Moderate Condition
 - Medium Tree in Moderate Condition
 - Medium Tree in Good Condition
 - Large Tree in Good Condition



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Project
Hinckley & District Hospital, Phase 2,
Mount Road, Hinckley, LE10 1AG

Drawing Title
Habitat Plan

Drawing Number
8420,EC/001/Rev1

Date
14/04/25

Author / Checked By
AS / AC

Source
Basemap source: © 2025 Airbus, Maxar
Technologies, Map data © 2025

Appendix 4 – Habitat Condition Assessment Forms

Survey Cover Sheet				
Survey date/s	27-Jan-25	Site name or location	Hinckley & District Hospital, Mount Road, Hinckley, LE10 1AG	
Weather conditions	Partly cloudy, up to 8 degrees.	Project or development name	Hinckley & District Hospital, Phase 2, Mount Road, Hinckley, LE10 1AG	
Surveyor name	Fletcher Telling	On-site or off-site	On-site	
Survey reference	8420,EC and 9212,EC	Reason for assessment (if not baseline condition survey)		
Notes				

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)				
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type				
Grassland - Modified grassland				
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Onsite, Hinckley & District Hospital, Mount Road, Hinckley, LE10 1AG	Survey date and Surveyor name	Fletcher Telling 27th Jan 2025	
Limitations (if applicable)	Some areas were not accessible and identification of species was not undertaken due to the time of year the survey was done.	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	8420, EC/9212, EC	
Grid reference	SP 429411 93711	Habitat parcel reference	Grassland	
Habitat Description				
A small area of grassland was present in the north and a more extensive area to the southwest. Given the time of year grass species were not identified other plants present include nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), Buddleja sp., and daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>).				
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification				
Condition Assessment Criteria				
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)		Notes (such as justification)
	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	Y		Due to the time of year not all plant species were ID to species level and therefore this criterion is assumed yes.
A	Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.			
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Y		
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present).	Y		
	Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.			
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	N		Building site adjacent and grass showed signs of physical damage.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	N		Physical damage has caused areas of bare ground.
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y		
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y		
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)				
			Number of criteria passed	5
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)		Score Achieved x1/7		
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A				
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A		X		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)				
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score				
N/A				
Footnotes				
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> .				
Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species; or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.				
Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.				
Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).				

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types							
Habitat Type							
Native hedgerow							
Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch							
Native hedgerow with trees							
Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch							
Species-rich native hedgerow							
Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch							
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees							
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch							
Habitat Description							
See full PEA report for detailed habitat descriptions.							
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification							
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On-site, Hinckley & District Hospital, Mount Road, Hinckley, LE10 1AG		Survey date and Surveyor name		Fletcher Telling 27th Jan 2025		
Limitations (if applicable)			Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)		8420,EC/9212,EC		
Condition Assessment Details							
A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the 'favourable condition' criteria.							
This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook ¹ and Favourable Conservation Status document ² . For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook.							
Best practice would be to record the species, age, spacing and other key information about all trees present along a hedgerow within the 'Habitat Description' box, as well as other key features of the hedgerow.							
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes							
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)	Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Criteria description	Habitat parcel reference				
			H1	H2			
			Grid reference				
		SP4295993690		SP4297393709			
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types			Criterion passed (Yes or No)		Notes (such as justification)		
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).		N	N	Trimmed to a height of approximately 1m.
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).		N	N	Trimmed to a height of approximately 1m.
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).		Y	Y	
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).		Y	Y	
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length; - Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and - Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc, can limit available habitat niches.		N	N	Developed land either side of hedgerows.
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.		Y	Y	Hedgerows did not possess perennial vegetation.
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .		Y	Y	
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).		N	N	Hedgerows were cut to a very low height.
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only							
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient ⁸), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.				
E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.				
The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.							
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees							
Category	Category Requirements			Metric Score			
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.			3			
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).			2			
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).			1			
				Score achieved:			
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees							
Category	Category Requirements			Metric score			

Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3	
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total; AND Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	2	
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1	
		Score achieved:	
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
N/A			
Footnotes			
Footnote 1 – DEFRA (2007) <i>Hedgerow Survey Handbook. A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK</i> . [online] Available on: layout (hedgeink.org.uk)			
Footnote 2 – STALEY, J.T. ET AL. (2020) <i>Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows</i> . [online] Available on: Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows - RP2943 (naturalengland.org.uk)			
Footnote 3 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			
Footnote 4 – CHEFFINGS, C. M. et al. (2005) <i>The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain. Species Status 7: 1-116</i> . [online] Available on: The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (Species Status No. 7) JNCC Resource Hub			
Footnote 5 – BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND (BSBI). <i>Definitions: wild, native or alien?</i> [online] Available on: Definitions: wild, native or alien? – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (bsbi.org)			
Footnote 6 – BSBI and Biological Records Centre (BRC) (2022) <i>Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora</i> . [online] Available on: Acknowledgements Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora (brc.ac.uk)			
Footnote 7 – GB NON-NATIVE SPECIES SECRETARIAT (GBNNS) (2022) Available on: Home » NNS (nonnativespecies.org)			
Footnote 8 – See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees, Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk)			
and Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)			



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