

File Note

Site Address: Markfield Road, Ratby, Leicester, LE6 0LU

Client Name: Ryan Pasch

Reference: Motor cross useage

Date: 2nd July 2025

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide (Natural England, 2024), habitat degradation occurring after 30 January 2020 must be taken into account when establishing a site's baseline biodiversity value. As clarified in Section 2.3 and Table 2-1 of the guidance, if habitats are found to have been intentionally or avoidably degraded following this date—through activities such as vegetation clearance, unmanaged succession, or the laying of hardstanding—then the baseline condition must reflect the pre-degradation state. This mechanism is in place to prevent deliberate habitat degradation being used to reduce biodiversity baselines and manipulate gain calculations.

The area in question, however, does not fall under the definition of post-2020 degradation. It has a longstanding history of informal recreational use, specifically as a motocross practice area, dating back to at least 2004. Aerial imagery from Google Maps (2006) confirms this usage, showing clear activity across the site, while the formation of a practice pit is visible by 2011. Anecdotal and local evidence suggests the pit was excavated around 2008, with the last recorded motocross use taking place in 2017.

Crucially, aerial imagery from 2018—the closest available to the 2020 reference date—continues to show clear signs of degraded habitat condition, with visible earth disturbance and poor vegetative cover. These conditions are a direct legacy of the historic use, rather than any recent or strategic intervention. Since 2017, the site has undergone a gradual, informal process of natural recovery and basic land management, not associated with attempts to manipulate its biodiversity status.

Furthermore, the planned reversion of this land to paddock constitutes a return to a lawful agricultural land use, rather than an ecologically harmful change. Earlier aerial imagery from 2000 supports this former condition and intended restoration.

Importantly, this specific parcel of land is located outside the red line boundary of the proposed development. As such, it does not form part of the biodiversity baseline or the post-development BNG assessment area. In line with the Statutory Metric, the condition and history of land outside the application site are not subject to baseline penalties or gain-related considerations.

Conclusion

Based on the long-standing, pre-2020 recreational use, the absence of deliberate recent degradation, the intended lawful restoration to paddock, and its location beyond the development boundary, this area does not fall under the definition of post-2020 degradation under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Natural England, 2024). No adjustments to baseline condition or penalties are warranted. This supports the integrity of the current BNG assessment and aligns with national guidance.

Google imagery between 2000 and 2025.



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