

Zoe Massey
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Leicestershire
LE10 1AW

23 October 2025

Dear Zoe,

RE: The Coppice, Burbage, Leicestershire

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in September 2025 by Springbourne Homes to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the land at The Coppice, Burbage, Leicestershire, hereafter known as the site. This letter provides a summary of the initial findings.
- 1.2. The current proposal for the site is to pursue the planning application for an additional self-build bungalow within a wider development. Planning permission for the wider development was granted in September 2022 (planning ref 21/00556/FUL; appeal ref: APP/K2420/W/22/3297466).
- 1.3. Self-build developments, as that detailed with the new application, fall under the list of exemptions for Biodiversity Net Gain, so typically this would not be considered necessary in this instance. However, it has been noted that it is likely that the council would expect no net loss to be illustrated. Furthermore, the new bungalow development would likely have an adverse effect on the overall Biodiversity Net Gain aspirations of the wider consented scheme, with this likely lowering the overall Biodiversity Net Gain results for the wider scheme to below no net loss. As such, it is considered likely that there will be a need to both illustrate no net loss of the new proposals as well showing how this does not lower the overall net gains delivered as part of the wider contented scheme.
- 1.4. In order to demonstrate that the development will deliver net gains in biodiversity, an assessment has been made against the current landscape proposals (see Appendix 1).
- 1.5. In order to demonstrate measurable net gains (as required within the National Planning Policy Framework), an assessment was made using the Statutory Metric for the new

application. Additionally, an assessment was made using the original Biodiversity Metric 2.0 to demonstrate adherence to the previous planning permission granted for the wider site.

2. Statutory Biodiversity Metric

2.1. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was released on 29 November 2023 and was updated on 12 February 2024. It uses habitat features as a proxy measure for capturing the value and importance of nature and uses calculations to assess the importance of each habitat based on its size, ecological condition and strategic location.

2.2. Methodology

2.2.1. The site was originally surveyed in May 2020 using extended Phase 1 methodology. Given the passage of time, an updated survey was undertaken in October 2025 based on UK Habitat survey (UKHab) methodology, as recommended by Natural England, whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail.

2.2.2. Taking into account that the site had to subject to legal vegetation clearance under the previous planning permission (Appeal Reference: APP/K2420/W/22/3297466), the original 2020 habitat survey results were translated into UKHab classification for the purposes of this BNG assessment. Additionally, the BNG assessment adheres to the habitat degradation rule within the Environment Act 2021.

2.2.3. Measurements for on-site habitats pre-development were calculated using Natural England's QGIS Net Gain Habitat Mapping template and QGIS Import Tool. Information regarding the habitats present, as well as their condition, were based on survey information obtained in Ecological Assessments dating from January 2021 by Ecology Solutions. The Biodiversity Metric User Guide, Technical Supplement as well as professional judgement, was used to inform the habitats condition criteria.

2.2.4. Measurements for post-development on-site habitats are based on the Encon Associates Landscaping and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (see Appendix 1).

3. Results and Discussion of Metric

3.1. This section should be read in conjunction with the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 2.0 calculation tool (reference: 8936.Biodiversity Metric.dv8), Natural England Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (reference: 14224.The_Statutory_Metric_dv1) and Ecology Solutions' previous Ecological Assessment (report reference: 8936.EcoAs.vf2 dated January 2021), both of which have been provided separately.

3.2. Site Baseline

2020 Baseline

3.2.1. The following main habitat / vegetation types were identified within the site during the extended Phase 1 methodology surveys undertaken in May 2020, translated to UK Habitat survey (UKHab) methodology:

- Other Neutral Grassland.

3.2.2. The location of these habitats, which are photographed and described in detail within the Ecological Assessment (report reference: 8936.EcoAs.vf2 dated January 2021) and BNG Assessment (report reference: 8936.BNGBriefingNote.dv6 dated April 2021) produced to support the wider consented scheme (Appeal Reference: APP/K2420/W/22/3297466). These habitats reflect the position prior to any vegetation clearance that related to the consented scheme.

Off-site Baseline

3.2.3. A UKHab survey was undertaken by Ecology Solutions in October 2025 for an area located 5.5 km northwest of the site in Stoke Golding, which lies within the Local Planning Authority's boundaries of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (see Figure 3.1 below).

3.2.4. This area is designated for BNG off-setting and comprises entirely of modified grassland. It is dominant by Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. Other species that were rarely recorded include White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Dovesfoot Cranesbill *Geranium molle*, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Golden Ragwort *Senecio doria*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* and Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*.

3.2.5. Table 3.1 below summarises the condition assessment for the modified grassland habitat present within this area.

Table 3.1. Condition assessment for the modified grassland habitat

Grassland Condition Criteria / Pass or Fail		Description
A – 6-8 species per m ² .	Fail	Grassland is dominant by Crested Dog's-tail and Red Fescue with a significant low occurrence of other species.
B – There is a varied sward height.	Pass	The parcel contained a mosaic of areas with a sward height being either below or above 7cm.
C – Scrub accounts for less than 20% of area.	Pass	Scrub was absence with the parcel.
D – Physical damage evident in >5% of total area.	Fail	Evidence of physical damage included overgrazing by the present livestock and pathways created by vehicles.

Grassland Condition Criteria / Pass or Fail		Description
E – Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5% of total area.	Pass	Bare ground was rarely observed within the parcel.
F – Cover of Bracken >20%.	Pass	Bracken was absence with the parcel
G – Combined cover of species indicative of a sub-optimal condition ¹ and physical damage >5% cover. No INNS are present.	Fail	Physical damage was evident across the parcel with a low occurrence of sub-optimal species.

3.3. Post-Development

New Application

- 3.3.1. The BNG assessment of the current scheme has highlighted that the new self-build bungalow will result in a percentage change of -61.02% for on-site habitats when set against the 2021 baseline. The enhancement of the 0.27 ha off-site modified grassland in "Poor" condition to other neutral grassland in "moderate" condition with the 19 individual trees planting compensate for the on-site net loss, resulting in an overall percentage change of +248.09% on-site habitats, as detailed in the Statutory Metric (ref. 14224.The_Statutory_Metric_dv1). Therefore, were the entire off-site area to be enhanced, this would illustrate a significant net gain and in turn a "no net loss" position, despite BNG not being applicable here. This is detailed in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2. Summary of New Application's Biodiversity Metric Results.

On-site Baseline	Habitat Units	0.44
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	0
Off-site Baseline	Habitat Units	0.51
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	0
On-Site post-intervention	Habitat Units	0.17
	Hedgerow Units	0.84
	Watercourse Units	0
Off-site post-intervention	Habitat Units	1.81
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	0
Total net unit change	Habitat Units	1.03
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	0
Total net Percentage gain	Habitat Units	+248.09%
	Hedgerow Units	N/A
	Watercourse Units	N/A

Wider Consented Scheme

- 3.3.2. Additionally, when considering the new self-build bungalow and the impacts this will have on the consented scheme's net gains the new application would

¹ Species indicative of suboptimal condition for Low distinctiveness grasslands include Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, Curled Dock *Rumex crispus*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Greater Plantain *Plantago major*, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, and Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*.

result in a change of -6.74% loss for on-site habitats, which is a change from the 2% net gain illustrated by the consented scheme. However, when considering the inclusion of the off-site enhancement this would result in overall percentage change of +3.51% as detailed in the updated Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (ref. 8936.Biodiversity Metric.dv8). This would adhere to the "no net loss" position under the previous planning permission. This is detailed in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3. Summary of Wider Consented Scheme's Biodiversity Metric Results.

On-site Baseline	Habitat Units	12.26
	Hedgerow Units	4.72
	Watercourse Units	0
Off-site Baseline	Habitat Units	0.59
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	0
On-Site post-intervention	Habitat Units	11.43
	Hedgerow Units	5.91
	Watercourse Units	0
Off-site post-intervention	Habitat Units	1.86
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	0
Total net unit change	Habitat Units	0.44
	Hedgerow Units	1.19
	Watercourse Units	0
Total net Percentage gain	Habitat Units	+3.51%
	Hedgerow Units	N/A
	Watercourse Units	N/A

4. Further Considerations

- 4.1. When including the off-site land, the new application, as well as the wider consented scheme, show biodiversity net gains. However, some consideration as to the amount of off-site land being used should be had, particularly given it is only expected to need to align with a no net loss position. Furthermore, there needs to be consideration as to how the offsite scheme is going to achieve a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain alone and avoid assigning most of the green open space to the self-build bungalow.
- 4.2. As such, we recommend that the off-site area be reduced to 0.254 ha as detailed below. This would result in overall percentage changes of +234.74% for the new self-build bungalow and +2.98% for the wider consented scheme. The +2.98% biodiversity net gain for the consented scheme would then be similar to the +2.94% biodiversity net gain originally reported and maintain the no net loss originally achieved.



Figure 4.1. Proposed area (blue) for required biodiversity net gain off-setting

Yours sincerely,

Courtney Long, on behalf of Ecology Solutions Ltd.

Ecologist

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