Elton Ecology

Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD

Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Document Control

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Author:	CBM BSc (Hons)
Review:	PMH BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM
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1. Summary

Table 1: Summary

Report Purpose	The objective of the present Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report is to provide an initial assessment as to whether the proposed development can deliver BNG or not for the design option(s) being considered.
Methodology	• A UKHab and condition assessment survey was carried out of the site on the 8th May 2025 with reference to best practice guidelines by a suitably qualified ecologist. • A biodiversity metric calculation was made, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.
Results & Conclusions	Via the proposed scheme of on-site habitat creation and enhancement, assessment has shown that a biodiversity net gain in habitats (14.45%) can be achieved. Trading rules were satisfied.

2. Introduction

Background

2.1. Elton Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Jonathon Swindell to conduct a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Study of the site known as Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD.

Relevant Documents

2.2. The present assessment has been informed by the following documents:

- Survey – Location Plan (Layout ID: J1008974-01, Rev C) (The Rural Planning Co, June 2025)
- Planning – Block Plan (Layout ID: J1008974-11, Rev B) (The Rural Planning Co, June 2025)
- DWT Response (Reference number: DWTAVA2135) (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, 4th November 2025)

Site description

2.3. The site comprises areas grassland with scattered scrub. The site is located south of Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD (Figure 1: Site Location Plan) (central OS grid reference: SK 32465 51915).

Development Proposals

2.4. The development proposals include the construction of a new agricultural building with access track.

Aims, Objectives & Scope

2.5. With reference to the Development Proposals and best practice BNG reporting guidelines (CIEEM, 2021), the objectives & scope of the present strategy are to provide:

- An assessment as to whether the project can feasibly deliver BNG or not for the options being considered;
- Advice for the project to maximise its ability to deliver BNG considering factors such as location, design, construction methods and programme (where known/relevant);
- If on-site BNG can't be achieved, consideration of the potential for off-site delivery of BNG, either securing land in close proximity to the project site or other alternatives, including more distant land under direct control or a brokered agreement; and
- Where, following a review of the BNG Principles, the delivery of project-wide BNG as an outcome is not considered possible (e.g., as a result of impacts to irreplaceable habitats or other site constraints), a record of the reasons and next steps towards delivering biodiversity gains elsewhere through the project.

Planning Policy and Legislation

2.6. A summary of biodiversity planning policies and wildlife legislation relevant to the site is provided in Appendix 1.

2.7. The Amber Valley Borough Council does not have a mandatory higher than 10% BNG target set within their local planning policy.

2.8. The site is covered by the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

3. Methodology

Personnel

3.1. The UKHab & condition assessment survey was carried out by Senior Ecologist PMH BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIEEM. PMH holds a Natural England Level 1 Bat Licence (CL17) (reference number: 2021-54491-CLS-CLS) and a Natural England Level 1 Great Crested Newt Licence (CL08) (reference number: 2022-10461-CL08-GCN) and a botanical Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) Level 3. PMH has attended formal training in UKHab survey, Biodiversity Net Gain, and botanical species identification. PH is an Associate member of CIEEM and is experienced in assisting and undertaking ecology surveys, GIS mapping, and report writing.

3.2. The BNG metric calculation was carried out by Ecologist CBM BSc (Hons). CBM is a Qualifying member of CIEEM, and is experienced in assisting and undertaking ecology surveys, GIS mapping, and report writing.

Desk Study

Important Ecological Features

3.3. A desk study was carried within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Elton Ecology, 2025) and should be read in conjunction with the present report.

Field Survey

UKHab & Condition Assessment Survey

3.4. A UKHab and condition assessment survey was carried out of the site on 8th May 2025 with reference to best practice guidelines from UKHab Ltd (Butcher et al, 2023). The site was walked over, and the habitats present classified based on key indicator species present.

3.5. The condition assessment was carried out with reference to guidance within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Sheets and Technical Supplement (Defra, 2024). The condition of each habitat was assessed by scoring each habitat parcel against the criteria set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets. A condition score was assigned to each habitat parcel based on a range of positive and negative indicators of quality against the optimum ecological state for the habitat, such as a grassland having species richness (positive) or the presence of invasive non-native plants (negative). This is used as an indicator for whether the habitat is a good or poor example of its habitat type/ distinctiveness, and to inform future management for ecological enhancement where applicable.

Biodiversity Net Gain Metric Calculation

3.6. The prevailing biodiversity metric calculation spreadsheet at the time of writing was used, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, with reference to the Technical Supplement and User Guide (Natural England, 2024).

3.7. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculates the biodiversity units present as follows:

Baseline Habitats:

Size of Habitat Parcel x Distinctiveness x Condition x Strategic Significance = Baseline Biodiversity Units

3.8. As the basis of the calculations, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric requires the user to enter a series of variables for each baseline, enhanced or created habitat parcel. These variables and decisions made are summarised in the sections below and presented in the results section.

No river habitats were present at the site, and as such variables relating only to river habitats have not been included.

Classification and Measurement of Habitats

3.9. The UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab) (UKHab Ltd, 2023) was used during field surveys and converted to the appropriate habitat classification via the Statutory Metric guidance (Defra, 2024), to complete the broad habitat and habitat type variables of the Statutory Metric calculator.

3.10. The habitat areas were mapped via the QGIS geographic information system application using a geo-referenced and ground-checked satellite image of the site.

3.11. Following the Statutory Biodiversity Metric QGIS Template and Import Tool User Guide (Natural England Joint Publication JP039), each habitat parcel was entered into the QGIS Template where the data was exported into the Import Tool to consolidate the data to be entered into the Statutory Metric calculator.

Strategic Significance

3.12. This is a score assigned to baseline and proposed habitats based on whether the habitat is significant for nature based on its location and habitat type. An assessment of this variable requires consideration as to whether the site is located within the relevant biodiversity local strategy, plan or policy, designated sites for nature conservation, and the sites position within the landscape.

3.13. With reference to the Department of Environment, Foord & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Policy paper 'Local Nature Recovery Strategies', there are 48 local nature recovery strategy areas covering England[1]. The relevant strategy area for the site is Derbyshire, and the relevant responsible body is Derbyshire County Council[2].

3.14. The LNRS applicable to the site is the Thriving with Nature A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities (Derbyshire County Council, 2025).

3.15. Other relevant planning policy documents are:

- Amber Valley Borough Council Local Plan

3.16. The site is not included within the planning policies as a nature conservation priority.

3.17. The relevant Local Biodiversity Action Plan for the site is the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Bespoke Compensation Agreed for Unacceptable Losses

3.18. This is a yes/no decision cell to indicate whether bespoke compensation has been agreed with decision makers for any losses in very high distinctiveness habitats.

Temporal Multiplier

3.19. Within the temporal multiplier for each created/ enhanced habitat parcel the metric requires the user to enter the following variables:

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategies/local-nature-recovery-strategies
[2] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1166611/Map_of_local_nature_recovery_strategy_areas_and_responsible_authorities.pdf

- Habitat created in advance/ years: The Statutory Metric rewards habitat creation in advance of losses by reducing the temporal risk multipliers added.

- Delay in starting habitat creation/ years. If there will be a significant delay in the creation of a habitat type relative to any losses (e.g. phased development), the number of full years that the creation will be delayed is entered. The Statutory Metric then adds the number of years to the pre-populated time to target condition, which increases the effect of the risk multiplier.

Limitations

3.20. The accuracy of habitat area measurement is limited by the methods by which the baseline data was collected and resolution of development proposal plans. In this instance, baseline habitat areas have been calculated by cross referencing illustrative habitat plans mapped in the field with georeferenced aerial imagery.

3.21. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric uses habitats as a proxy for biodiversity, which is a simplification of the real world. Although informed by evidence and reasoning, the outputs of the Metric are not scientifically precise or absolute values. The generated biodiversity unit scores are a proxy for the relative biodiversity worth of a habitat or site. The metric and its outputs must be interpreted with ecological expertise and a common-sense approach. The metric is an aid to biodiversity decisions.

3.22. All dimensions and distances provided are approximate.

3.23. The present study has been informed by the Planning – Block Plan (The Rural Planning Co, June 2025) and as such assumptions have been made regarding the final planned design including landscaping.

4. Results

Baseline Habitats

4.1. The baseline habitats and condition assessments at the site including the data entered into the Biodiversity Metric are given in the following tables and mapped on Figure 2: Baseline Habitat Plan. The baseline habitat condition scores and post-development retentions are shown in Figures 3 and 4. Photographs of the habitats referred to are presented in Appendix 2: Photographs.

4.2. No watercourses, including watercourse riparian zones, were present within the baseline habitats.

4.3. No hedgerows were present on site

4.4. No irreplaceable habitats were present on site.

4.5. The baseline habitat date was taken to be 8th May 2025, with no evidence of recent habitat degradation occurring on site.

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Table 2: Habitat Baseline Areas

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Data Entered into Metric					Description	Photograph Ref No. (Appendix 2: Photographs)
		Metric Reference No.	Area (hectares)	Condition	Strategic Significance	Habitat retained/enhanced/lost		
Grassland	Modified grassland	1	0.0547	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.0019ha retained, 0.0528ha lost	The field in the east of the site comprised an area of modified grassland, dominated by annual meadow grass *Poa annua* with frequent perennial rye *Lolium perenne*, occasional common mouse ear *Cerastium fontanum*, greater plantain *Plantago major*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale agg*., sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, and tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, rarely present sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, cocks foot *Dactylis glomerata*, slender speedwell *Veronica filiformis*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, locally abundant willowherb *Epilobium sp.*, Locally frequent Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and English bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta.*	1
Grassland	Other lowland acid grassland	2	0.0434	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Lost	An area of other lowland acid grassland was present in the southwest of the survey site and was dominated by red fescue *Festuca rubra* with abundant sweet vernal grass, frequent white clover *Trifolium repens*, occasional scattered gorse *Ulex europaeus* scrub, ribwort plantain, Yorkshire fog, heath speedwell *Veronica officinalis*, creeping buttercup, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, field woodrush *Luzula campestris*, and bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, and rarely present English bluebell, bracken, pignut, mouse ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*, and red clover *Trifolium pratense*.	2
Grassland	Other lowland acid grassland	3	0.0987	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Enhanced	An area of other lowland acid grassland was present in the northwest of the survey site and included abundant red fescue, annual meadow grass, and sweet vernal grass, with frequent ribwort plantain, occasional bulbous buttercup, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, sheep's sorrel, scattered gorse scrub, cocks foot, white clover, and English bluebell, and rarely present cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, pignut, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, creeping buttercup, greater stitchwort *Rabelera holostea*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, red clover, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, field woodrush, dandelion, heath speedwell, and mouse ear hawkweed.	3

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Table 3: Condition Assessment – Low Distinctiveness Grassland (Adapted from Natural England, 2024)

Condition Assessment Criteria		**Modified grassland**
		Condition Achieved (Y/N)
1	"There must be 6-8 species per m^2. If a grassland has 9 or more species per m^2 it should be classified as a medium distinctiveness grassland habitat type. NB - this criterion is essential for achieving moderate condition."	N – average of 3 species per square metre.
2	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 insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Y – varied sward height.
3	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) 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.	Y – scrub present but less than 10% of total area
4	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 – vehicle damage present at access track greater than 5% of total area
5	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	N – bare ground present at damage greater than 10% of total area.
6	Cover of bracken less than 20%.	Y – bracken present but less than 5% total area
7	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).	Y – no INNS observed
Essential criterion 1 achieved (Y/N)		N
Number of criteria passed		4
Condition Assessment Result	**Condition Assessment Score**	
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion 1	**Good (3)**	
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion 1	**Moderate (2)**	
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR **4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion 1**	**Poor (1)**	✓

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Table 4: Condition Assessment – Medium Distinctiveness Grassland (Adapted from Natural England, 2024)

Condition Assessment Criteria		**Southwest other lowland acid grassland**	**Northwest other lowland acid grassland**
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	N – a high proportion of sub-optimal condition indicator species was present	N – a high proportion of sub-optimal condition indicator species was present
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 insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Y – varied sward height observed.	Y – varied sward height observed.
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	Y – localised area of bare ground was observed.	Y – localised area of bare ground was observed.
D	Cover of bracken is less than 20% and cover of scrub is less than 5%.	N – cover of gorse scrub totalled over 5% of grassland area	N – cover of gorse scrub totalled over 5% of grassland area
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage accounts for less than 5% of total area. No invasive non-native plant species present.	N - creeping thistle, creeping buttercup, and white clover were present, covering approximately 15% of grassland area.	N - creeping buttercup, cow parsley, common nettle, and white clover were present covering more than 10% of grassland area.
Essential criterion 1 achieved (Y/N)		N/A – acid grassland	N/A – acid grassland
Number of criteria passed		2	2
Condition Assessment Result	**Condition Assessment Score**		
Passes 5 criteria	**Good (3)**		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria.	**Moderate (2)**		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria;	**Poor (1)**	✓	✓

Proposed Design

4.6. The development proposals include the construction of a new agricultural building with access track.

4.7. The proposed 'consolidated' values for post-development created habitats at the site entered into the Biodiversity Metric are given in the following Tables and mapped on Figure 5: Proposed Habitats Plan. The target conditions for the habitats are shown in Figure 6: Proposed Habitat Target Condition Plan.

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Table 5: On-site Habitat Creation

Data Entered into Metric						
Broad Habitat	**Proposed Habitat**	**Area (hectares)**	**Condition**	**Strategic Significance**	**Habitat created in advance/years**	**Delay in starting habitat creation/years**
Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.0586	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0	0
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.0376	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0	0

Table 6: On-site Habitat Enhancement

Data Entered into Metric							Enhancement Approach
Baseline Habitat	**Proposed Habitat**	**Area (hectares)**	**Condition**	**Strategic Significance**	**Habitat created in advance/years**	**Delay in starting habitat creation/years**	
Other lowland acid grassland (poor condition)	Other lowland acid grassland	0.0987	Moderate	Formally identified in local strategy – grassland enhancement is outlined in the Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	0	0	The existing poor condition other lowland acid grassland in the northwest of the site will be enhanced to moderate condition other lowland acid grassland. The following criteria, with reference to Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets (Defra, 2024), will be targeted to achieve moderate condition: • Criterion 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 insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed. • Criterion D - Cover of bracken is less than 20% and cover of scrub is less than 5%. • Criterion E - Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage accounts for less than 5% of total area. No invasive non-native plant species present. Criterion B can be achieved through implementing a cutting regime to ensure a varied sward height. Criteria D and E can be targeted through the management and eradication of species indicative of sub-optimal condition, and management of the scrub.

5. Biodiversity Metric Results

5.1. The completed biodiversity metric excel spreadsheet has been issued with the present report and should be read in conjunction with it. The 'headline results' output of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Summary of Biodiversity Metric Output

	Habitat / Hedgerow	**Unit**
On-site Baseline Units	**Habitat Units**	0.68
On-Site Post-Intervention Units	**Habitat Units**	0.78
Total Net Unit Change	**Habitat Units**	**+0.10**
Total % Unit Change	**Habitat Units**	**+14.45%**
Trading Rules Satisfied?		**Yes**

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6. Conclusion

6.1. Via the proposed scheme of on-site habitat creation and enhancement, assessment has shown that a biodiversity net gain in habitats (14.45%) can be achieved. Trading rules were satisfied.

7. References

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

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UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at https://www.ukhab.org)

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8. Figures

Figure 1: Site Location Plan (Overleaf)

Figure 2: Baseline Habitat Plan (Overleaf)

Figure 3: Baseline Habitat Condition Plan (Overleaf)

Figure 4: Baseline Habitat Retention Plan (Overleaf)

Figure 5: Proposed Habitat Plan (Overleaf)

Figure 6: Proposed Habitat Condition Plan (Overleaf)



Legend

Red Line Boundary

Project:
Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD

Drawing:
Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Date: 13-06-2025
Version: FINAL
Author: PH
Job No: P2834/2

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Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Modified grassland
- Other lowland acid grassland

Project:
Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD

Drawing:
Figure 2: Baseline Habitat Plan

Date: 13-06-2025
Version: FINAL
Author: PH
Job No: P2834/2

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Legend

Red Line Boundary

Baseline Habitat Condition

Poor

Project:
Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD

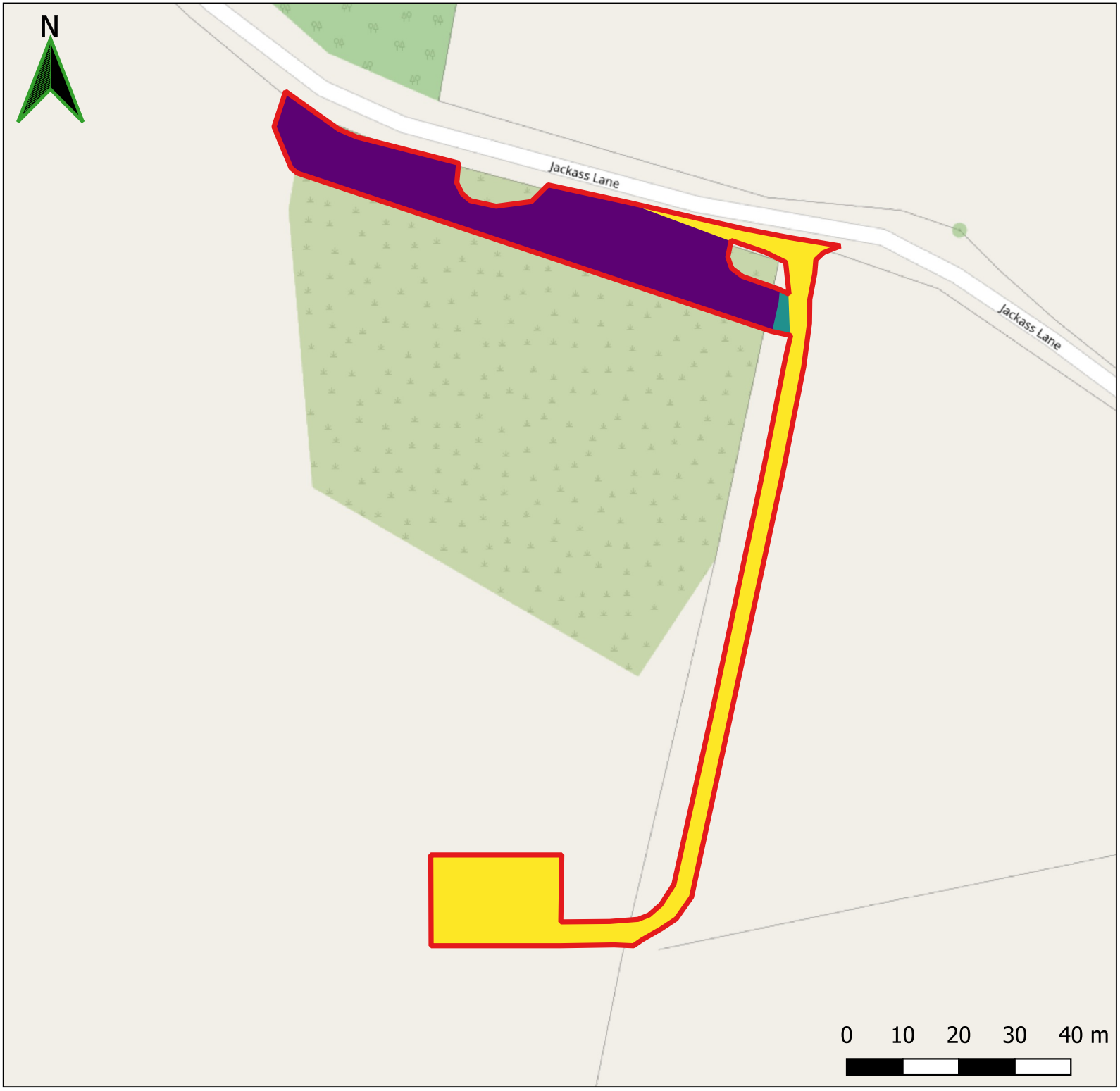
Drawing:
Figure 3: Baseline Habitat Condition Plan

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Legend

- Red Line Boundary

Habitats Retention

- Enhanced
- Retained
- Lost

Project:
Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD

Drawing:
Figure 4: Baseline Habitat Retention Plan

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Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Other lowland acid grassland

Project:
Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD

Drawing:
Figure 5: Proposed Habitat Plan

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Legend

- Red Line Boundary

Proposed Habitats Condition

- Moderate
- Poor
- N/A - Other

Project:
Land at Jackass Lane, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2RD

Drawing:
Figure 6: Proposed Habitat Condition Plan

Date: 03-12-2025 Version: FINAL

Author: CBM Job No: P2834/2

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Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation Summary

This appendix serves as a summary of relevant policy and legislation. It is not intended to supersede the policy or legislation documents to which it refers, and the relevant full documents should always be consulted prior to decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Biodiversity is a material consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). Relevant text to biodiversity from the NPPF is described below.

"187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

[…]

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;"

"192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

[…]

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. "

"193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

[…]

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."

The Environment Act 2021

Schedule 14 makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England. The biodiversity net gain relevant percentage is currently set to 10% by the Act.

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Appendix 2: Photographs



Photo 1: Modified grassland in the east of the site.



Photo 2: Other lowland acid grassland in the southwest of the site.



Photo 3: Other lowland acid grassland in the northwest of the site.