



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT: FEASIBILITY STAGE

TUDOR COTTAGE

MEOPHAM, KENT

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Author	John Rowland BSc (Hons)
Checked by	Megan Knapp BSc (Hons) Amy Wright BSc MSc CEcol MCIEEM
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Registered Office: Camburgh House, 27 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3DN

Native Ecology, Unit 90, Waterham Business Park, Highstreet Road, Waterham, Faversham, Kent. ME13 9EJ

t: 01227 656757

e: info@native-ecology.co.uk

w: www.native-ecology.co.uk

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1. SUMMARY

- S.1 Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 makes provision for a biodiversity gain of at least 10% to be a condition of planning permission in England.

PROPOSALS

- S.2 Proposals include the construction of a stable building and an associated storage building. The majority of the modified grassland in the access track will be retained.

RESULTS

- S.3 The biodiversity net gain feasibility assessment shows that current development proposals result in a **70.11% loss** in the biodiversity value of habitat units. No watercourse or hedgerow units are present or proposed.
- S.4 A further 0.05 biodiversity units are required to achieve 10% net gain.
- S.5 There are no medium or above distinctiveness habitats within the Site and therefore no conflicts with regards to trading rules.

RECOMMENDATION

- S.6 The following measures should be considered to reduce the loss of biodiversity units within the Site:
- Creation of 4no. small trees in moderate condition along the access track will achieve net gain on Site.
- S.7 Should net gain not be achievable through on-site creation and enhancement, the purchase of units from a 3rd party supplier, or statutory credits, can provide compensation to achieve an overall 10% gain.

Next steps

- S.8 Section 18 provides an overview of the next steps of the Biodiversity Net Gain process.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details a Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment undertaken in respect of proposed development at Tudor Cottage, Nash Street, Meopham, Kent, DA13 9AA (site centred Q 64096 69078).

Table 1. Site Location

Site address	Tudor Cottage, Nash Street, Meopham, Kent
Grid reference (at centre)	TQ 64096 69078
Local Planning Authority	Gravesham Borough Council
County	Kent
National Character Area	North Downs
Biodiversity Opportunity Area	None

COMMISSION

- 2.3 Native Ecology was commissioned by Nursted Court Ltd in February 2025 to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment of the Site to include baseline calculations and change in biodiversity value.

APPLICATION SITE

- 2.4 The application site, hereafter referred to as “the Site”, comprises a section of short sward, intensively managed modified grassland and intensively horse grazed field. The Site extends to 0.03ha.

PROPOSED WORKS

- 2.5 The development proposals for the Site include the construction of a stable building and an associated storage building.

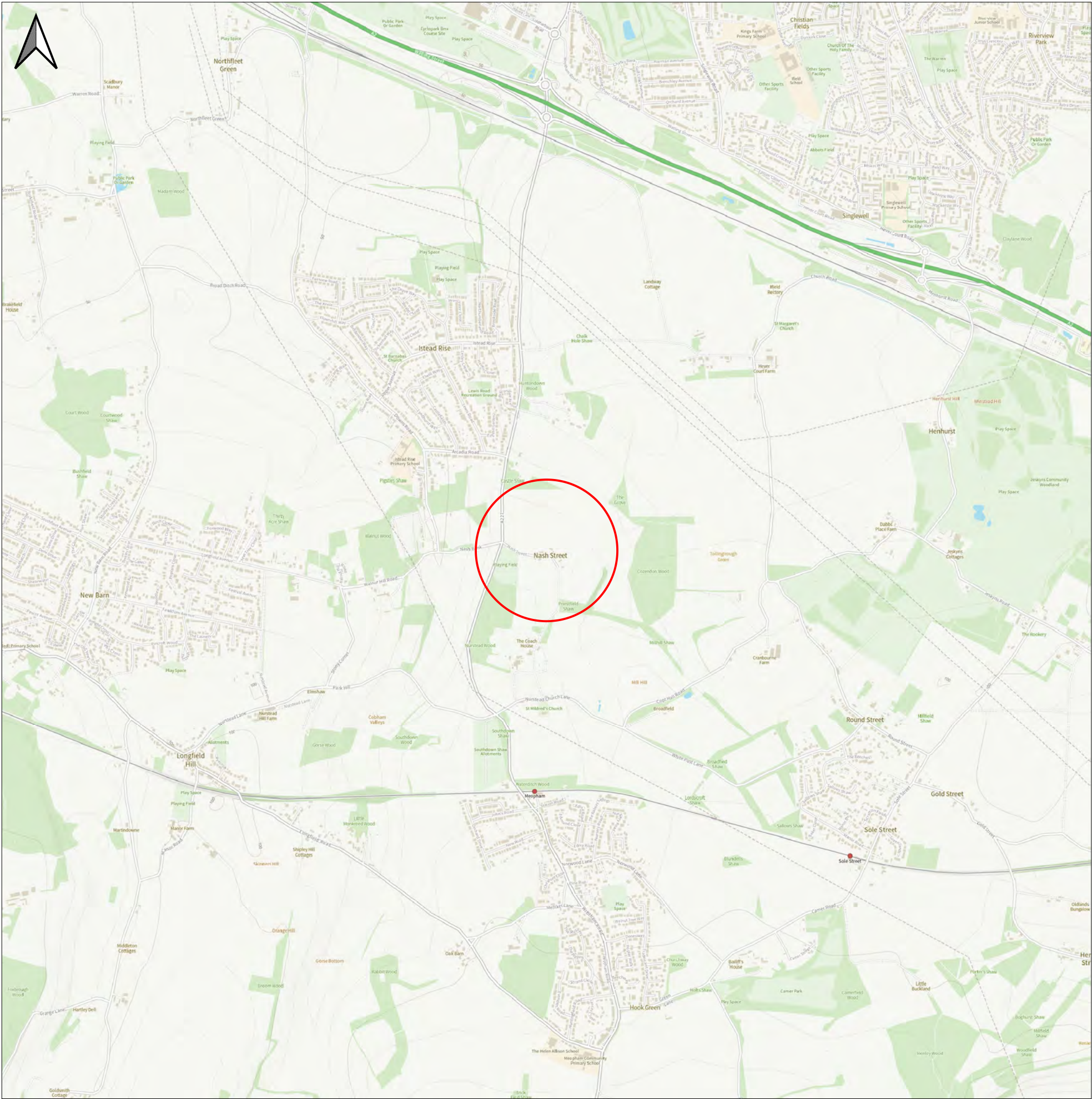
BIODIVERSITY TARGET

- 2.6 Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 makes provision for a biodiversity gain of at least 10% to be a condition of planning permission in England. This is the supported target of Gravesham Borough Council.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.7 The objectives of the report are to:
- Provide an overview of the baseline value of the Site.
 - Measure and map the post development habitat proposals.
 - Provide an estimate of the post-development units.
 - Provide a summary of the overall net gain assessment calculations.

- Undertake a desk study to inform recommendations for habitat enhancement and creation. Provide recommendations to achieve net gain based on appropriate good practice principles.



 native ecology PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY INTEGRATION	
Site location plan	
Tudor Cottage Meopham, Kent	
Figure ref:	1805_Figure 1
Revision:	-
Date:	16/07/2025
Scale:	1:20,000 (Main canvas)
Paper size:	A3

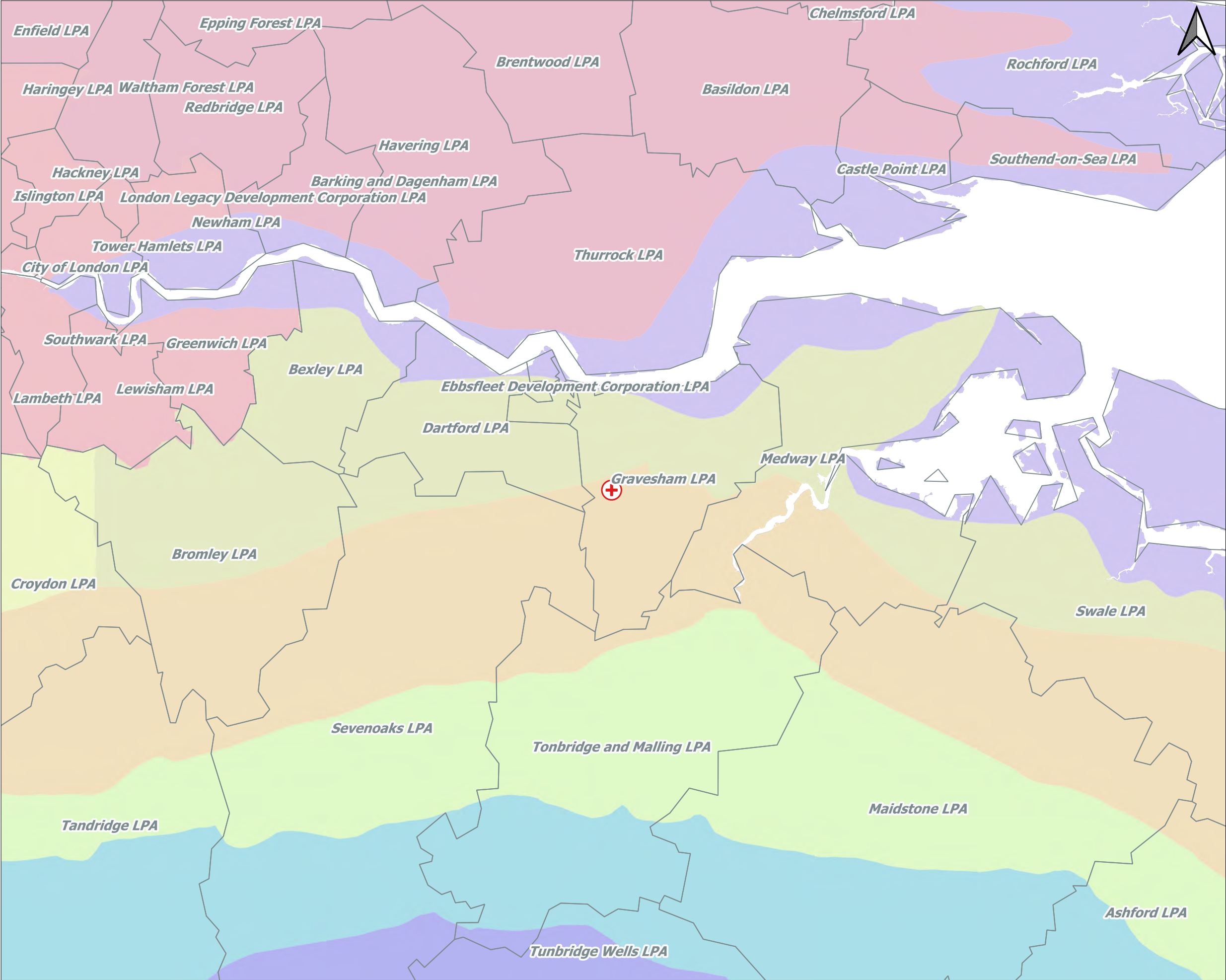


Legend

 Site boundary



Existing Site Plan	
Tudor Cottage Meopham, Kent	
Figure ref:	1805_Figure 2
Revision:	-
Date:	16/07/2025
Scale:	1:350
Paper size:	A3

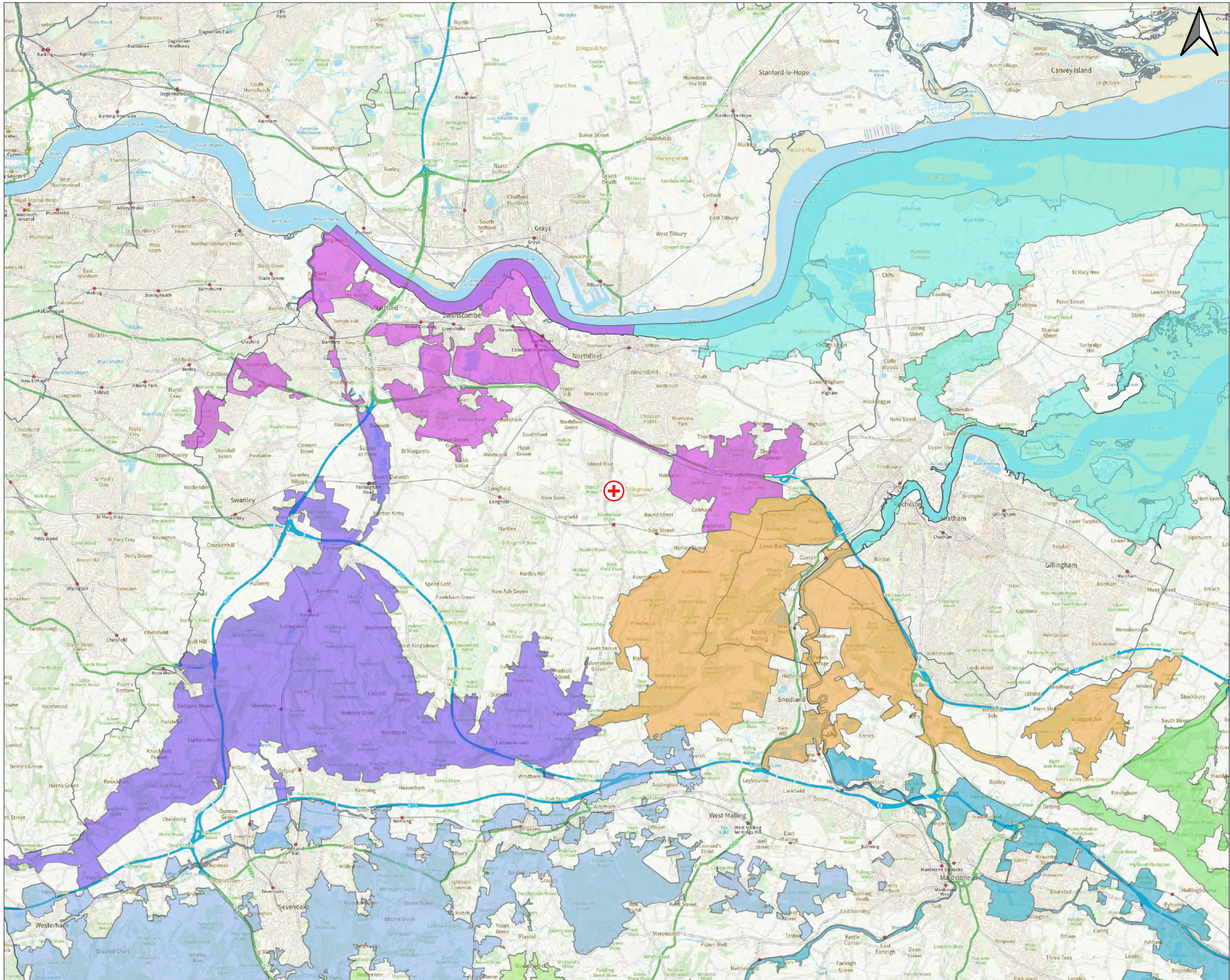


Legend

-  Site Location
-  LPA
-  Greater Thames Estuary
-  High Weald
-  Inner London
-  Low Weald
-  North Downs
-  North Kent Plain
-  Northern Thames Basin
-  Thames Basin Lowlands
-  Wealden Greensand



LPA and NCA Plan	
Tudor Cottage Nash Street, Kent	
Figure ref:	1805_Figure 3
Revision:	-
Date:	20/02/2025
Scale:	1:200000
Paper size:	A3



Legend

-  Site Location
-  Central North Downs
-  Greensand Heaths & Commons
-  Medway & Low Weald Grassland & Wetland
-  Medway Gap & North Kent Downs
-  Mid Kent Downs Woods & Scarp
-  Mid Kent Greensand & Gault
-  North Kent Marshes
-  Thames-side Green Corridors



Biodiversity Opportunity Area Plan

Tudor Cottage
Nash Street, Kent

Figure ref:	1805_Figure 4
Revision:	-
Date:	20/02/2025
Scale:	1:130000
Paper size:	A3



7. METHODOLOGY

POST-CONSTRUCTION BIODIVERSITY UNITS AND NET CHANGE

7.1 The biodiversity net gain assessment calculations are based on the following post-development layout:

- Site Layout Plan (Promap, Proposed block plan dated 2025)

Mapping

7.2 Following baseline data collection, the post-development habitat mapping process in QGIS involved the precise georeferencing and import of proposed site layout plans, including landscaping and habitat creation areas. Subsequently, new vector layers were created to accurately digitise the boundaries of all proposed post-development habitats, categorised according to the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab). Each digitised feature was attributed with its designated UKHab type, projected future condition, and strategic significance, alongside calculated areas for polygons and lengths for linear features.

Calculation

7.3 From the mapping, appropriate figures, based on the current proposals, for habitat retention, creation and enhancement were input into the Statutory Metric tool.

7.4 The Metric measures predicted changes in biodiversity value and includes additional influences to account for risks associated with habitat creation and enhancement. Three risk factors are incorporated into the Metric tool:

- Difficulty of creating or restoring a habitat.
- Temporal risk - The time it takes for habitat to reach required condition. The risk can be minimised by reducing the delay between site clearance and habitat creation.
- Spatial risk - The location of any off-site mitigation. Off-site mitigation outside the LPA/NCA boundary carries a higher risk than mitigation within the same LPA/NCA as the development site.

When all data is input, The Statutory Metric tool provides a summary of the net change in biodiversity unit value for habitats, hedgerows and watercourses.

ASSUMPTIONS

7.5 The feasibility calculations are based on the following assumptions:

- Habitat creation measures have been assigned target conditions that are considered to be achievable within 30 years and in the context of the development.
- There will be a 1 year delay between habitat loss and creation.
- Habitat creation will be managed appropriately and replaced as required.
- All off-site habitats will be retained and protected during works.

STRATEGIC HABITATS

7.6 The following resources were used to provide recommendations for habitat creation within the Site, and to inform the assignment of strategic significance:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (Native Ecology, 2025a)
- Summary of Interim Strategic Significance Guidance for Biodiversity Net Gain in Kent and Medway (Kent County Council, 2024)
- The Kent Biodiversity Strategy (Kent Nature Partnership, 2020)
- Natural England Habitat Network Maps
- Kent Landscape Information Service (KLIS) habitat opportunities tool
- British Geological Survey Geology Viewer
- Magic Map Application

RECOMMENDATIONS

Area habitats

7.7 Recommendations for habitat retention, enhancement, and creation were formulated by combining the biodiversity metric results with an analysis of strategic significance, detailed landscape plans, and the existing habitat types and conditions. This integrated approach aimed to identify optimal interventions that not only satisfied the required Metric target, but also maximised the overall biodiversity contribution resulting from the proposed design.

8. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

8.1 A Baseline Habitat Assessment (Native Ecology, 2025, report reference 1805_R03) was used to inform the calculations within this report, which details the pre-development biodiversity unit value of the Site, including details of the following for each defined habitat parcel:

- Habitat type
- Area or length
- Distinctiveness
- Condition
- Strategic significance

8.2 The baseline reports provides the necessary data for input into the Statutory Metric, which resulted in the following overall biodiversity unit values:

- Area habitats - 0.07 biodiversity units.

9. PROPOSED DESIGN

PROPOSALS

- 9.1 Proposals include the construction of a stable building and an associated storage building on the footprint of a 0.016ha concrete pad. Two small areas of compacted aggregate hardstanding will be created, one immediately south of the concreted area, and one at the junction of the Site with Nash Street on the southern boundary. The access track will be formed of two strips of a cellular porous plastic grid (the resulting habitat type of which will be a composition of artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface and ruderal/ephemeral vegetation for the purpose of the Metric) and the surrounding retained modified grassland.
- 9.2 Retained habitats may be impacted during construction, but must be restored to their original condition within 2 years.
- 9.3 Table 2 provides an overview of the habitat retention and creation measures that will be undertaken within the Site. A post-development habitat plan is provided in Section 11.
- 9.4 Appendix 1 provides relevant habitat definitions with recommendations for achieving the proposed target condition.

Table 2. Summary of proposed habitat retention, creation and enhancement

	HABITAT	INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION	CONDITION	STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE	AREA	UNITS DELIVERED
Habitat units	Modified grassland	Retention	The existing modified grassland surrounding the cellular porous plastic grid will be retained.	Poor	Low	0.008 ha	0.02
	Developed land, sealed surface	Creation	Concrete footprint at the northern portion of the Site, which will support 1no. stable block and 1no. outbuilding.	N/a	Low	0.016 ha	0.00
	Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface		Areas of compacted aggregate hardstanding. For the purpose of the metric, half of the cellular web habitat area will comprise of artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface.	N/a	Low	0.007 ha	0.00
	Ruderal/ephemeral		For the purpose of the metric, half of the cellular web habitat area will comprise of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation.	Poor	Low	0.002 ha	0.00
	Total						0.02

10. PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

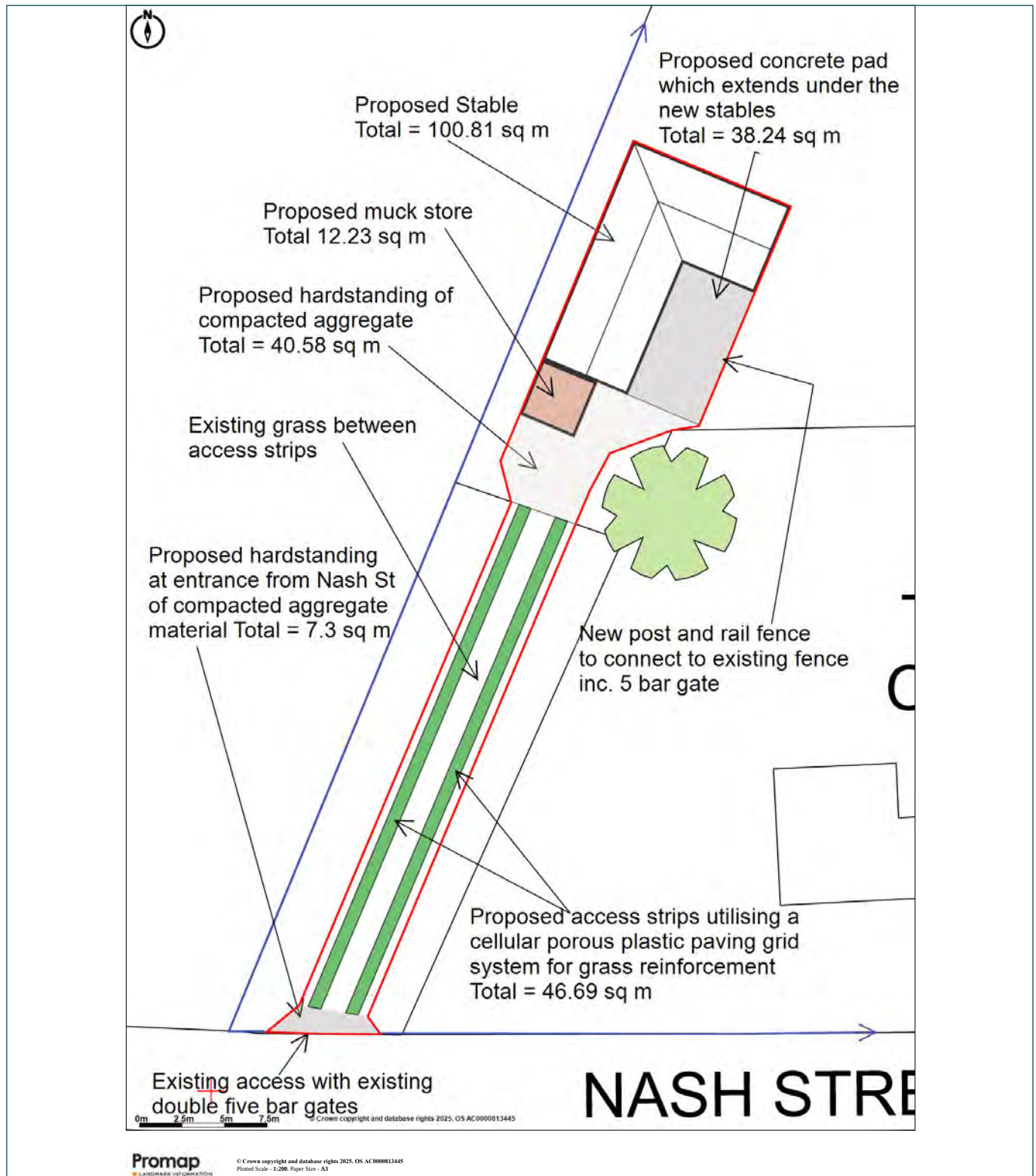


Figure 4. Site Layout Plan (Promap, Proposed block plan dated 2025).



Legend

- Application site boundary
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Cell-web habitat



Biodiversity Net Gain
Post Development Habitat Plan

Tudor Cottage
Meopham, Kent
DA13 9AA

Figure ref:	1805_Figure 7
Revision:	-
Date:	28/07/2025
Scale:	1:250
Paper size:	A3

12. METRIC RESULTS

12.1 Full results of the baseline and post-development biodiversity unit calculations are provided with the accompanying Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (Native Ecology, 2025c), which supports this assessment.

HEADLINE RESULTS

12.2 The biodiversity net gain feasibility assessment shows that current development proposals result in a **70.11% loss** in the biodiversity value of the area habitats within the Site. No hedgerow or watercourses are present or proposed.

12.3 Table 3 shows the overall results of the feasibility assessment.

Table 3. Overall change in biodiversity units

	BASELINE UNITS	POST DEVELOPMENT UNITS	NET CHANGE: UNITS	NET CHANGE: %	ADDITIONAL UNITS REQUIRED
Habitat units	0.07	0.02	-0.05	-70.11%	0.05

TRADING SUMMARY RESULTS

12.5 No habitats of medium, high or very high distinctiveness are present within the Site.

13. THE MITIGATION HIERARCHY

- 13.1 A process should be adopted within the design stage of the project to avoid, mitigate and compensate for potential negative ecological impacts, this process is known as the 'mitigation hierarchy'.
- 13.2 Negative ecological impacts should be avoided wherever possible by making amendments to the proposed layout. Where avoidance is not possible, mitigation to reduce the impact should be considered, for example through the creation or enhancement of habitats either on or off-site.
- 13.3 Avoidance and mitigation is most effective when considered as early as possible within a scheme, allowing for measures to be integrated into the design, an appropriate timeline to be developed and for alternatives to be considered.

Avoidance

- 13.4 In the biodiversity net gain process, avoidance should be considered first. Ecologically valuable habitats, including those of high distinctiveness and strategic importance, should be retained wherever possible.

Mitigation

- 13.5 When avoidance measures have been considered, mitigation measures can then be implemented to make up any unit deficits. This will include habitat creation and enhancement measures. On-site measures should be considered first, but off-site mitigation can also be undertaken and included within the net gain metric.

Compensation

- 13.6 Should mitigation measures not be sufficient to achieve net gain, compensation in the form of the purchase of units or statutory credits can be considered. The purchase of units from a 3rd party seller must be considered first. Should no units be available, statutory credits can be purchased. Statutory credits are intended to be used as a last resort option, and this is reflected in the cost. A minimum of 3no. 3rd party sellers must be approached before statutory credits can be used.

RISK REDUCTION

Temporal risks

- 13.7 Enhancement and creation of habitats in advance of construction works can increase the number of biodiversity units generated from the same area. Therefore, early consideration should be given to habitat enhancement and creation measures to ensure that they are brought forward as early in the construction schedule as possible.

14. STRATEGIC HABITATS

- 14.1 In accordance with Principle 6 of Biodiversity Net Gain (set out within guidance from CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA), proposed habitat creation should “use robust and credible evidence that is underpinned by local knowledge of biodiversity priorities when making decisions about appropriate habitats to enhance and create.”
- 14.2 Therefore, to inform recommendations for habitat creation and enhancement (provided in Section 15), a desk study was undertaken to investigate the local and landscape priorities.

AREA HABITATS

- 14.3 Table 4 provides a summary of habitats that could be created within the Site to provide beneficial outcomes for biodiversity at a landscape or local scale based on the results of the desk study.

Table 4. Summary of potentially beneficial habitat creation measures

HABITAT	SCALE	REASON	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
Tree planting	Local	The planting of native trees will benefit foraging bats and birds, among other species.	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Native Ecology, 2025a)

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The table below provides recommended mitigation and compensation measures. If net gain cannot be achieved through mitigation, compensation measures are required.

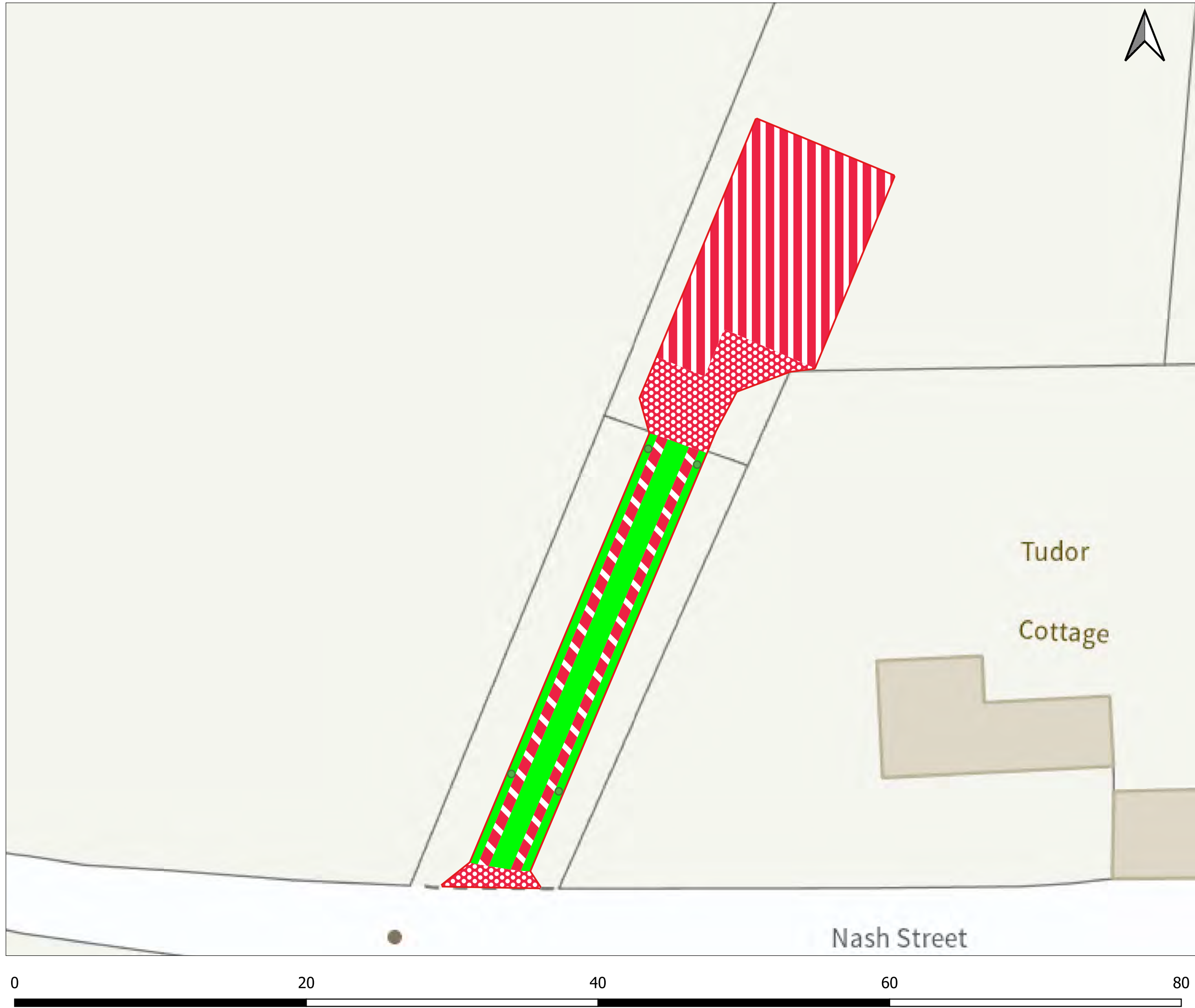
Table 5. Recommendations based on the mitigation hierarchy & good practice principles

HABITAT TYPE	UNIT DEFICIT	AVOIDANCE	MITIGATION	COMPENSATION (ESTIMATED COST PER UNIT)	
				3RD PARTY SUPPLIER*	STATUTORY CREDITS
Any habitat	0.05	N/a	A minimum of 0.05 units of habitat creation is required to make a 10% gain. Consider tree planting, green roof or green wall.	Varies with habitat type	

**There a large number of 3rd party suppliers in the market, and prices will vary according to the supplier, the level of service provided and the location of units.*

15.3 Section 16 provides a plan showing the proposed recommendations, which include:

- Creation of 4no. small trees in moderate condition along the access track will offset trading rules and achieve net gain on Site.



Legend

-  Application site boundary
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Modified grassland
-  Cellular-web habitat
-  Small tree

Creation of 4no. small trees in moderate condition will offset trading rules and achieve net gain.



Biodiversity Net Gain Recommendations Plan	
Tudor Cottage Meopham, Kent DA13 9AA	
Figure ref:	1805_Figure 8
Revision:	-
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Scale:	1:250
Paper size:	A3

17. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

- 17.1 All created and enhanced habitats must be managed for a period of 30 years.
- 17.2 Monitoring should be undertaken annually for 5 years, then every 5 years until the end of the 30 year period, and any required remedial actions should be undertaken.

Sustainability

- 17.3 As part of the net gain process, the wider environmental benefits of the project should be optimised.
- 17.4 Measures can include:
- Use of locally sourced materials and plants to reduce carbon footprint.
 - Use of sustainable and plastic free materials.
 - Maximise 'green' area to increase carbon storage potential. For example, consider the use of grass-crete in place of concrete.
 - Planting of trees and hedgerow to increase carbon storage potential and reduce heat island effect.

Additionality

- 17.5 Mitigation for protected species will not be required as a result of proposals. Therefore all measures can contribute to biodiversity net gain.

18. NEXT STEPS

- 18.1 Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 makes provision for a biodiversity gain of at least 10% to be a condition of planning permission in England. This is the target supported by Gravesham Borough Council.
- 18.2 Although a pre-commencement condition, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will likely require information during the decision making process to ensure that the biodiversity obligation can be met and that the condition can be discharged successfully.
- 18.3 Appendix 4 gives a visual summary of BNG within the planning process up to the point of approval.
- 18.4 The next steps in Biodiversity Net Gain process are outlined below.

REVISE LAYOUT

- 18.5 Consider the avoidance and on-site mitigation recommendations outlined in Section 15 and revise the development layout as appropriate. This should be an iterative process involving the design team and the ecologist, and should aim to maximise on-site delivery of biodiversity units.

CONSIDER OFF-SITE MITIGATION

- 18.6 If a unit deficit remains after avoidance and on-site mitigation measures have been maximised, the provision of off-site mitigation can be considered. To identify a suitable site for off-site mitigation, the location and ecological baseline should be considered. Sites with a low ecological baseline (for example developed land, cropland or modified grassland) and located within the LPA/NCA boundary will provide the greatest return.
- 18.7 Any off-site mitigation delivered by the developer is subject to the same legal requirements as units derived from 3rd party suppliers (see below).
- 18.8 When considering off-site mitigation, it is important to note that an ecological assessment of the off-site area, a legal agreement to secure the land, and a separate Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (see details below) will be necessary. These requirements may extend the application timeline. As with on-site BNG measures, off-site land will necessitate 30 years of management and monitoring
- 18.9 **Considering the above, given that only 0.05 biodiversity units are required, purchasing units from a 3rd party supplier would be a more efficient option in this case.**

DESIGN STAGE REPORT

- 18.10 On completion of layout revisions, a Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Report should be produced for submission with the planning application. This should provide details of the proposed habitat creation and enhancement measures that will be undertaken on-site and include a completed Metric Calculation and Kent Biodiversity Gain Statement.
- 18.11 Details of off-site mitigation/compensation, if finalised, can also be included within this report.

APPROACH 3RD PARTY SELLERS

- 18.12 If compensation is required to make net gain, 3rd party suppliers should be approached to determine if appropriate units are available. At least 3no. suppliers must be contacted before Statutory Credits can be considered.

SECURE OFF-SITE UNITS

- 18.13 To secure off-site units, a legal agreement will be required (S106 or Conservation Covenant), which will last at least 30 years from completion of the habitat measures.
- 18.14 Responsibility for habitat enhancement, creation and management will vary depending on the type of legal agreement. In the case of 3rd party units, responsibility will fall on the landowner or Responsible Body. However, when the developer is making gains on their own off-site land, they must take on this responsibility.
- 18.15 In addition, the off-site land must be registered on the biodiversity gain site register.

BIODIVERSITY GAIN PLAN

- 18.16 On receipt of planning permission, a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be completed and approved by the LPA before works can commence. This must be considered when planning a timetable of works. The biodiversity gain plan can only be submitted after planning permission is granted, and should be approved by the LPA within 8 weeks.
- 18.17 The biodiversity gain plan will detail the measures that will be undertaken to achieve a net gain. Application of the mitigation hierarchy must be evidenced within the biodiversity gain plan.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

- 18.18 The gain plan must be supported by a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) if off-site mitigation or significant gains will be delivered.
- 18.19 The HMMP is a detailed plan that outlines how the land will be managed over at least 30 years to:
- Create and enhance habitats for biodiversity net gain (BNG)
 - Manage and monitor the BNG
- 18.20 Natural England have produced a template (Natural England, 2023) to facilitate the completion of this document, with accompanying guidance.

PURCHASE OF STATUTORY CREDITS

- 18.21 On acceptance of the Biodiversity Gain Plan, any required statutory credits must be purchased.

19. REFERENCES

- Biodiversity Units UK (2025). The BNG Report Pricing and Key Insights. February 2025
- CIEEM (2019). Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development. A practical guide.
- CIEEM (2021). Biodiversity Net Gain Report & Audit Templates. Version 1.
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- Defra (2024b). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. February 2024.
- Kent County Council (2024). Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Note: Interim Strategic Significance Guidance for Biodiversity Net Gain in Kent and Medway. January 2024.
- Kent Nature Partnership (2020). Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to 2045. Available from: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents> [Accessed 21/07/2025]
- Multi-agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Interactive Map. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. <http://magic.defra.gov.uk> [Accessed 21/07/2025].
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- Natural England (2024). Statutory Biodiversity Credit Prices. Available from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-biodiversity-credit-prices> [Accessed 21/07/2025]

20. APPENDIX 1: HABITAT DEFINITIONS

Table 6. Habitat creation definitions and recommendations

Habitat Type	Definition	Recommendations
Small urban tree	The diameter of the tree at breast height (DBH) is 7.5-30cm at the time of planting.	To maximise the condition and biodiversity benefit of the planted trees it is recommended that native species are chosen for planting, and that they are planted in a location where they oversail vegetation.

21. APPENDIX 2: RELEVANT LEGISLATION

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 21.1 Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England. The Act amends the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 so that all planning permissions (except a small number of exemptions) will be subject to a pre-commencement planning condition requiring a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The biodiversity gain plan must demonstrate a net gain of at least 10% in the biodiversity value of the development site.
- 21.2 The Environment Act 2021 sets out the following key components of mandatory biodiversity gain:
- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using the Biodiversity Metric
 - Delivered on-site, off-site or via a new statutory biodiversity credits scheme
 - On-site and off-site habitat secured for at least 30 years via planning obligations or conservation covenants
 - National register for net gain delivery sites

22. APPENDIX 3: BNG GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

22.1 This assessment was undertaken in accordance with the following good practice guidelines:

- BS 8683 Process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain
- CIRIA (2019). Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development: A practical guide.
- CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016). Biodiversity net gain: Good practice principles for development.
- CIEEM (2021). Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.
- Defra (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Draft User Guide

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

22.2 Ten principles are set out within guidance from CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA for achieving biodiversity net gain. These principles (outlined below) have been used as a guide for this assessment and underpin the recommendations detailed in Section 9.

Principle 1: Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy

When using the biodiversity metric the principles and approach of the mitigation hierarchy must be employed. This includes avoiding impacts to ecological features where at all possible. If negative impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation and compensation measures should be undertaken to reduce the effects on ecological features.

Due to the method in which habitat creation and enhancement risks are accounted for within the metric, gains are more easily achieved where impacts to habitats are avoided.

Principle 2: Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere

Avoid impacts to irreplaceable habitats. A BNG Assessment cannot be carried out where these habitats are impacted as a result of proposals.

Principle 3: Be inclusive and equitable

Engage stakeholders early and achieve net gain in partnership where possible.

Principle 4: Address risks

Account for any risks and add contingency when calculating losses and gains.

Principle 5: Make a measurable Net Gain contribution

Contribute towards local nature conservation priorities.

Principle 6: Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity

Use robust and credible evidence that is underpinned by local knowledge of biodiversity priorities when making decisions about appropriate habitats to enhance and create.

Principle 7: Be additional

Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations.

Principle 8: Create a Net Gain Legacy

Ensure that net gain creates long-term sustainable benefits by mitigating risk and planning for long-term resilient management.

Principle 9: Optimise sustainability

Consider wider environmental benefits for societal and economical sustainability.

Principle 10: Be transparent

Communicate the net gain process and assessment, including justifications for decision making, to all stakeholders.

THE STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC

- 22.3 Whilst the metric can aid decision making on the areas a specific habitat types to be enhanced or created, the overall assessment should consider the principles of biodiversity net gain holistically alongside calculation scores.

Principles of the Statutory Metric

- 22.4 The Biodiversity Metric calculation has been undertaken in accordance with the principles set out within The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Draft User Guide (Defra, 2024) as follows:

Principle 1: The metric assessment should be completed by a competent person.

Principle 2: The use of this biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirements. This includes consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands.

Principle 3: This biodiversity metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidance and professional codes.

Principle 4: This biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice.

Principle 5: Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values.

Principle 6: This biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance.

Principle 7: Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe.

Principle 8: Created and enhanced habitats should be, where practical and reasonable, local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation.

Principle 9: The metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. However, proposals should aim to:

- maintain habitat extent (supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks)
- ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function

Rules of the Statutory Metric

22.5 In addition to the set of guiding principles, the biodiversity units are calculated using a set of 5 ‘rules’ as detailed by Defra within The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Draft User Guide (Defra, 2024) as follows:

Rule 1: The trading rules of the biodiversity metric must be followed.

Rule 2: Biodiversity unit outputs, for each unit type, must not be summed, traded or converted between types. The requirement to deliver at least 10% net gain applies to each type of unit.

Rule 3: To accurately apply the biodiversity metric formula, you must use the biodiversity metric calculation tool or small sites biodiversity metric tool.

Rule 4: In exceptional ecological circumstances, deviation from this metric methodology may be permitted by the relevant planning authority.

Biodiversity Net Gain

BASELINE TO PLANNING APPROVAL

