



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Katherine Parkin
FROM: Elizabeth Fagg
DATE: 08 December 2025
SUBJECT: 20251030 2 Green Farm, Cottages, Shorne

The following is provided by Kent County Council's Ecological Advice Service (KCC EAS) for Local Planning Authorities. It is independent, professional advice and is not a comment/position on the application from the county council. It is intended to advise the relevant planning officer(s) on the potential ecological impacts of the planning application and if sufficient/appropriate ecological information has been provided.

Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have must be directed in every instance to the planning officer, who will seek input from the EAS where appropriate and necessary.

SUMMARY: SUFFICIENT INFORMATION

We have reviewed the information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient **ecological and biodiversity net gain** information has been provided for determination. Recommended **condition/informative** wording is provided below.

A summary of our review of the submitted biodiversity net gain information is provided below. Detailed comments on the submitted ecological and biodiversity net gain information follow the subheadings below.

Table 1: To show a summary of our review of submitted biodiversity net gain information

Percentage Net Gain Required	Percentage Net Gain/Loss Reported for Area Habitats	Percentage Net Gain/Loss Reported for Linear Habitats	Net Gain Proposed: 1 – all on-site; 2 – no significant on-site and off-site; 3 - significant on-site and off-site	On-site 'significant' Net Gains Proposed (Yes/No)
10%	+10.34%	N/A	2	N

Using the national and local guidance regarding significance, we consider that the on-site biodiversity net gain (excluding private gardens) should not be treated as significant and so does not require securing for 30-years.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), all planning applications¹ for development (unless exempt^{2,3}), must deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), shown via use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric prior to commencement of any development.

Significant on-site gains, and all off-site gains will need to be secured for at least 30 years.

Having reviewed submitted information⁴, we consider a 10% biodiversity net gain is a statutory requirement of this proposed development. We consider there is no local policy biodiversity net gain requirement above 10% for this development.

We have produced the following table to aid the local planning authority in ascertaining whether sufficient BNG information has been submitted:

Table 2: To show whether the applicant has met the minimum validation requirements

Information Needed	Provided	Comments
Confirmation that the applicant believes that planning permission, if granted, the development would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition.	Y	Is the applicant correct about the BNG requirement and any exemptions? Check application form carefully.
The pre-development biodiversity value(s), either on the date of application or earlier proposed date (as appropriate) .	Y	Date of site survey 22/4/25
Where the applicant proposes to use an earlier date, this proposed earlier date and the reasons for proposing that date.	N/A	
The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on the date of application (or proposed earlier date) including the publication date of the biodiversity metric used to calculate that value.	Y	The site is 0.35 hectares in size, according to the information in the application form. The habitat area reported in the biodiversity metric calculation tool matches the reported red line boundary site area as per the application form. We are content with the baseline habitat classifications. The planning statement states that a section of arable land under the control of the applicant will be used to achieve BNG. This has been listed under off-site within the metric as it is outside the red line boundary.
A statement whether activities have been	Y	The submitted information supports that

¹ All planning applications for major development (unless exempt) submitted on or after 12th February 2024 in England, and all minor applications (unless exempt), submitted on or after the 2nd April 2024.

² Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

³ The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

⁴ References to the biodiversity value of any habitat or habitat enhancement within this section of the advice note refer to the value as calculated in accordance with the biodiversity metric.

carried out prior to the date of application (or earlier proposed date), that result in loss of onsite biodiversity value (' degradation '), and where they have: • a statement to the effect that these activities have been carried out; • the date immediately before these activities were carried out; • the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on this date; • the completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations, and • any available supporting evidence of this.		no on-site habitat degradation has occurred.
A description of any irreplaceable habitat (as set out in column 1 of the Schedule to the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) on the land to which the application relates, that exists on the date of application, (or an earlier date).	N.A	None reported.
Plan(s), drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North, showing onsite habitat existing on the date of application (or earlier proposed date), including any irreplaceable habitat (if applicable).	Y	

The habitat baseline must be correct prior to determination, but full details of how the proposals will deliver biodiversity gains are not strictly required until submission of the pre-commencement Biodiversity Gain Plan. However, it is advisable to seek an indication prior to determination as, it gives an indication of how the biodiversity gain hierarchy will be applied, and if granted consent, the project cannot commence until this information has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. This information will also provide sufficient indication as to how conditions need to be applied should planning permission be granted for this application.

Information has been submitted with this application to give confidence that the biodiversity gain hierarchy can be effectively applied to this application, and how conditions should be applied should planning consent be granted.

We consider that the baseline information is correct for the habitats present. The metric states all the other neutral grassland is to be lost, however the post development habitat creation states some will be retained (0.1556Ha) and reduce in condition from moderate to poor. This is realistic due to recreational pressure. This post development poor condition habitat is 0.64 habitat units of medium distinctiveness habitat, and as such due to the condition change rather than creation, we do not consider it significant.

Off-site compensation is required for this development and is proposed within cropland under control of the applicant, and is subject to the general BNG condition.

The suggested conditions below show how on-site biodiversity net gain can be secured by condition; it may be used with a planning obligation securing any monitoring contributions.

OFF-SITE GAINS (NEEDS TO BE REGISTERED)

'Off-site' biodiversity gains are any BNG measures proposed outside of the red line boundary. It can be achieved through habitat creation on land owned by the applicant/developer, a third-party provider or through the purchase of BNG units from a habitat bank operator for a site which is registered on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register.

The statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) must contain the biodiversity gain site register reference number for any offsite units if these are used. BNG sites must be registered here: [Register a biodiversity gain site - GOV.UK](#).

Where off-site gains are secured on land owned by the developer (but outside the redline boundary), or on third-party land (but not through a 'habitat bank operator'⁵), the biodiversity net gain needs to be subject to a deed of conservation covenants or Section 106 (as appropriate). Section 106 agreement templates are available on the Planning Advisory Service website. It is generally inappropriate to rely solely on conditions to secure off-site biodiversity net gain. The following needs to be secured as part of the off-site biodiversity net gain:

- The submission of a habitat management and monitoring plan (HMMP);
- Notice of HMMP implementation and completion of the habitat creation and enhancement works;
- Timescales for completion of habitat creation, and the submission of a completion report;
- Submission of monitoring reports;
- A habitat monitoring fee to be paid to the local planning authority on every habitat management monitoring event.

The HMMP shall be submitted when the general BNG condition is discharged and shall contain the following information ⁶:

- (a) a non-technical summary;
- (b) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- (c) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- (d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- (e) the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority.

Monitoring reports shall be submitted to local planning authority in writing in accordance with the methodology and frequency specified in the approved HMMP.

⁵ A registered BNG Habitat Bank is a site which has been registered on the Biodiversity gain site register and has a site register reference number ([Register a biodiversity gain site - GOV.UK](#)).

⁶ From Local Government Association

Where off-site gains are to be secured through a 'habitat bank operator' (which has its own legal agreement and HMMP), no additional conditions or section 106 obligations are required, above a condition requiring biodiversity net gain to be delivered as set out in the planning application.

The submission of provisional/draft legal documents outlining the agreement between the applicant and the provider of any off-site gains are advisable prior to determination to confirm that the proposed route to delivering net gain is feasible, but this information is not required until submission of the pre-commencement Biodiversity Gain Plan.

How the BNG is to be achieved will have to be agreed, secured and, where applicable, registered on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register, prior to the submission of the pre-commencement Biodiversity Gain Plan.

BIODIVERSITY GAIN PLAN

Single Phase Development

Suggested Condition Wording:

The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the baseline information within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal reference number 2025/02/04, for 2 Green Farm Cottage, Green Farm Lane, Shorne Kent, dated 27th June 2025 and prepared by KB Ecology.

Reason: To ensure the proposals are in accordance with details submitted and considered as part of the planning application, in accordance with [insert relevant policy].

The above condition is not a statutory requirement but unless imposed there would be no requirement that the Biodiversity Gain Plan submitted for approval to be in accordance with any biodiversity or ecological information submitted with the planning application. This condition may not be appropriate for some outline planning permissions where the post-development biodiversity value will not be known until reserved matters have been approved.

PROTECTED SPECIES

A preliminary ecological appraisal was conducted, and the site is predominately grassland with regular grass management. No trees or hedgerows are proposed to be lost. Protected species have been considered, and we are satisfied that impacts will be minimal. To ensure no suitable habitat becomes established we recommend grass management continues.

Therefore, to protect from limited adverse impacts to protected species during clearance and construction we recommend a precautionary work statement is a condition with the suggested wording below.

Suggested condition wording:

From commencement of works (including site clearance), to avoid impacts to protected and priority species, the following precautionary mitigation should be implemented:

- 1. Any hedgerow and trees to be retained, including its roots, will be protected from damage;*

2. *All temporarily stored building materials (that might act as temporary resting places) will be isolated within hardstanding areas and raised off the ground, e.g. on pallets.*
3. *Any work to vegetation that may provide suitable bird nesting habitats should be carried out outside of the bird breeding season (1st March to 31st August inclusive) to avoid destroying or damaging bird nests in use or being built. If within the breeding bird season a survey by a suitably qualified person needs to be conducted to confirm absence, prior to commencing works.*
4. *If at any time a protected species is discovered within the works area all works must stop while a suitably qualified ecologist and/or Natural England are consulted. Works will not resume until any required surveys and/or mitigation are completed.*
5. *Practical pollution measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) will be in place to avoid noise, dust and run off, or reduce impacts during construction*

ENHANCEMENTS

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced through the planning system. Enhancement refers to providing net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for BNG, avoidance, mitigation and compensation. Some actions have been proposed within the PEA. As such, we advise that an enhancement plan is provided that includes responsibilities for future management and a condition wording is suggested below.

Suggested Condition Wording:

Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall include full details of biodiversity enhancements and shall include a detailed, scaled soft landscaping plan, planting schedule and habitat management measures. Details may also include (as appropriate) provision of durable and suitably-placed bat/bird boxes, native wildflower sowing (with details of seed mixes/preparation and management measures), tree planting and the creation of hedgehog highways (by creating small 13×13cm gaps in any close board fencing).

The Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To protect and enhance biodiversity in accordance with paragraphs 187, 192 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and in order for the Council to comply with Part 3 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Elizabeth Fagg
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- Location plan, GSP, 20/1/25
- Preliminary ecological appraisal, KB Ecology, 27/6/25
- Planning Statement, GSP, 8/10/25
- Block plan, GSP, 20/1/25

- BNG assessment sheets
- Proposed block plan, GSP, 29/1/25
- BNG metric, completed 24/9/25