TECHNICAL NOTE: BNG FEASIBILITY REVIEW

Hallam Land

Land at Longstanton, Cambridge

24.09.2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Hallam Land commissioned FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR) to complete a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) feasibility assessment for the Land at Longstanton (OS Grid Reference: TL 39340 65309), herein referred to as 'the Site'.

1.2 This Technical Note summarises the survey and assessment methodologies employed, the survey results, and the Statutory Metric results. Any assumptions made to support the assessment have also been outlined.

Site Location and Context

1.3 The Site is situated in Longstanton, Cambridge.

1.4 The Site comprises cereal crops, modified grassland, linear features watercourses and lines of trees and native hedgerows.

Proposed Development

1.5 The Site is proposed for residential and commercial development including a new school, encompassing open space and landscaping areas.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Baseline Habitat Assessment

2.1 A baseline habitat survey was completed broadly following the UKHab Classification system and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide. This involved a systematic walkover of the Site boundary to map all habitats present to assess their condition and complete the Statutory Biodiversity metric Calculation Tool. Habitat condition assessment surveys were completed following the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Condition Assessments. The summary results of the habitat condition assessment survey are presented in this report.

2.2 The habitat survey and condition assessment were undertaken on 17 December 2025, by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Limitations

2.3 The survey was completed outside the optimal period (May to September) but given the predominance of arable land across the Site, it is not expected that this would affect the overall outcome of the baseline assessment.

Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

2.4 Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool was used to inform this BNG note. It is an MS Excel spreadsheet used to quantify the predicted net change in biodiversity value ("biodiversity units") of a proposed development site before and after development. It treats the area-based habitats and linear features such as hedgerows and tree lines separately and is based on pre-determined values, along with published written guidance set by a Natural England-led team of experts.

2.5 The Site was surveyed and mapped, as described above. The survey results were digitised using QGIS, with the existing habitats identified and areas automatically generated.

2.6 On-site post-development habitats were determined from the Concept Masterplan (HLM091) with outline proposals mapped and digitised using QGIS to generate areas for each habitat proposed for enhancement.

2.7 These pre- and post-enhancement habitat areas were input into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation tool. The metric automatically assigns a habitat distinctiveness score for each baseline and proposed habitat.

2.8 The metric also assigns a range of pre-assigned factors to each proposed habitat. Subject knowledge experts have advised these and are universal multipliers generated by the metric itself for the following variables relevant to habitat creation, enhancement or restoration proposals:

- *difficulty of creating or restoring/enhancing a habitat:* This pre-assigned score is based on how complex a particular habitat type is to create or restore/enhance
- *temporal risk:* this is the 'time to target condition' for any habitat and determines how long a particular habitat type is likely to take to reach the condition score that the desired condition score is assigned to it.

- *spatial risk:* this score is based on the distance between the site of habitat loss and any habitat creation or enhancement proposals at any off-site offsetting solutions.

2.9 A desk study review has informed the strategic significance multiplier within the metric. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide provides full details of the calculation methodology.

3.0 BASELINE

Strategic Significance

3.1 The Cambridge Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Map[1] published on 23 December 2025 shows an area that could be of important for biodiversity along the watercourse running through the Site.

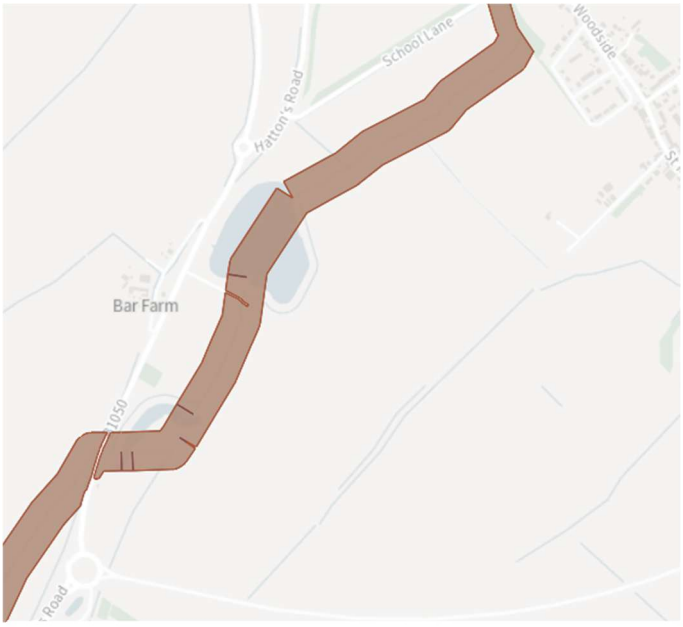


Figure 1. Screengrab from the Cambridge & Peterborough LNRS

3.2 To meet the criteria, the proposals should establish natural or semi-natural buffer zones 50m wide adjacent to all rivers and streams to improve river quality and consequently their biodiversity value and ecological functionality.

3.3 The Illustrative Proposals do provide semi-natural buffers along the watercourse. The width of these buffers will however range from 60-20m along the length of the watercourse. Buffers of this nature and the implementation of semi-natural habitats will provide the relevant mechanisms to improve water quality and the biodiversity of the watercourse. Thus, the LNRS aspirations are followed, but given the varying widths, the strategic level betterment has not been applied to the baseline or proposed habitats.

Baseline Habitats

3.4 The site was largely dominated by cereal cropland. The northwestern parcel which lies east of Hatton's Road was sown with a winter bird seed mix at the time of survey.

[1] Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, 2025 [Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – NOW LIVE! | Natural Cambridgeshire].

3.5 An area of grassland was present along the top and bankside of a ditch, separating two areas of arable field. This grassland parcel was assessed as a low distinctive modified grassland (MG), currently in poor condition. There was an overall short sward height c.<10cm.

3.6 There is an extensive network of watercourses on Site and an area of bramble scrub was present along the northern boundary.

3.7 Two areas of hardstanding were present for access into arable fields and provided no ecological value.

3.8 Habitats of greater ecological value present within the Site include ditches, broadleaved trees, tree lines and hedgerows. H3 was assessed as meeting the criteria as 'important' hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Where possible, these habitats should be retained and buffered to built development by semi-natural habitat.

3.9 *Table 1* below provides a summary of baseline habitats and conditions, illustrated by *Figure 1.*

Table 1: Baseline Habitat Conditions

Habitat	Condition	Distinctiveness
Cereal Crops	N/A	Low
Modified grassland	Poor	Low
Bramble Scrub	N/A	Medium
Developed Land/ Sealed Surface	N/A	Low
Rural Individual Trees	Good	Medium

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Site is proposed for residential and commercial development encompassing open space and landscaping areas. At this stage, detailed landscaping such as seed mixes or tree species, are not yet known, proposed habitats have been mapped using a reasonable and conservative approach. For example, a 2m buffer around developed areas with predicted high footfall have been mapped as modified (amenity) grassland (Figure 2).

4.2 Target conditions have been selected based on our experience, reflecting what can realistically be achieved on-site while adopting a precautionary 'worst-case' approach for areas likely to experience high levels of disturbance. As such, 50% of the proposed other neutral grassland in the open space to the north and 50% in the west between the two off-site balancing ponds have been targeted as 'moderate' condition.

4.3 Within the open space mixed native species scrub planting with occasional mature standard tree in good and moderate condition could be used to form the screening planting in the northern and southern area of the Site.

4.4 New individual trees have been proposed, 73 in moderate condition within the POS and 63 in poor condition within the general infrastructure. The proposals seek to retain the two individual rural trees within the baseline.

4.5 New hedgerows, covering a total length of 1.65km have been mapped as native hedgerows and specie-rich native hedgerows with trees. 0.65km of species-rich hedgerows with trees has been proposed to ensure compliance with trading rules for hedgerow losses. Additionally, 0.635km of native hedgerow with trees (associated with bank or ditch) (H3) will be enhanced to a species-rich of native hedgerow with trees (associated with bank or ditch) to compensate for the loss of 0.03km for access to the Site and meet trading rules (see Figure 3).

4.6 A formal River Condition Assessment (RCA) and Illustrative Proposals has not been completed as part of this exercise. The baseline habitats adjacent to the watercourse are currently intensive managed arable land and the Illustrate Proposals demonstrate GI varying between 20-60m can be provided adjacent to the watercourses. Given this, it is expected the at the detailed design stage the potential net gain in watercourse units will significant exceed the mandatory 10% requirement.

4.7 Opportunities for enhancement will be explored in detail as part of the detailed design phase alongside assessing the proposals to ensure that the scheme can demonstrate a minimum 10% net gain on-site, required to discharge the mandatory BNG condition once planning permission has been received. This will be demonstrated by submitting a Biodiversity Gain Plan, which will provide full details of how the scheme will achieve the minimum BNG requirements, per the BNG PPG.

4.8 If a detailed review of the Site determines that a gain will not be achievable onsite, then offsite compensation options will need to be sought to ensure that the scheme can discharge the mandatory BNG condition that will be applied.

5.0 SUMMARY OF STATUTORY METRIC

5.1 The baseline and outline habitat proposals have all been inputted into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. *Table 2* provides a summary of the headline results of the assessment completed for the proposals.

Table 2: Statutory Biodiversity Metric Headline Results

Baseline	Habitat Units	110.35
	Hedgerow Units	13.59
Post-Intervention	Habitat Units	121.90
	Hedgerow Units	15.18
Total Net Unit Change	Habitat Units	**11.55**
	Hedgerow Units	**1.60**
Total Net Percentage Change	Habitat Units	**10.47%**
	Hedgerow Units	**11.75%**

5.2 The Statutory Metric has demonstrated that the scheme could result in a net gain in habitat units of 10.47% and a net gain in hedgerow units of 11.75%. As discussed, at Paragraph 4.6 given the GI corridors adjacent to the watercourse it is expected that the proposals will also exceed the minimum 10% net gain in watercourse units.

Habitat Trading Rules

5.3 To meet trading rules, it has been assumed that at least 0.65 km of created hedgerow will comprise a species-rich native hedgerow with trees. Additionally, the retained 0.635km of H3 will be enhanced to a species-rich native hedgerow with trees (associated with bank or ditch).

Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy

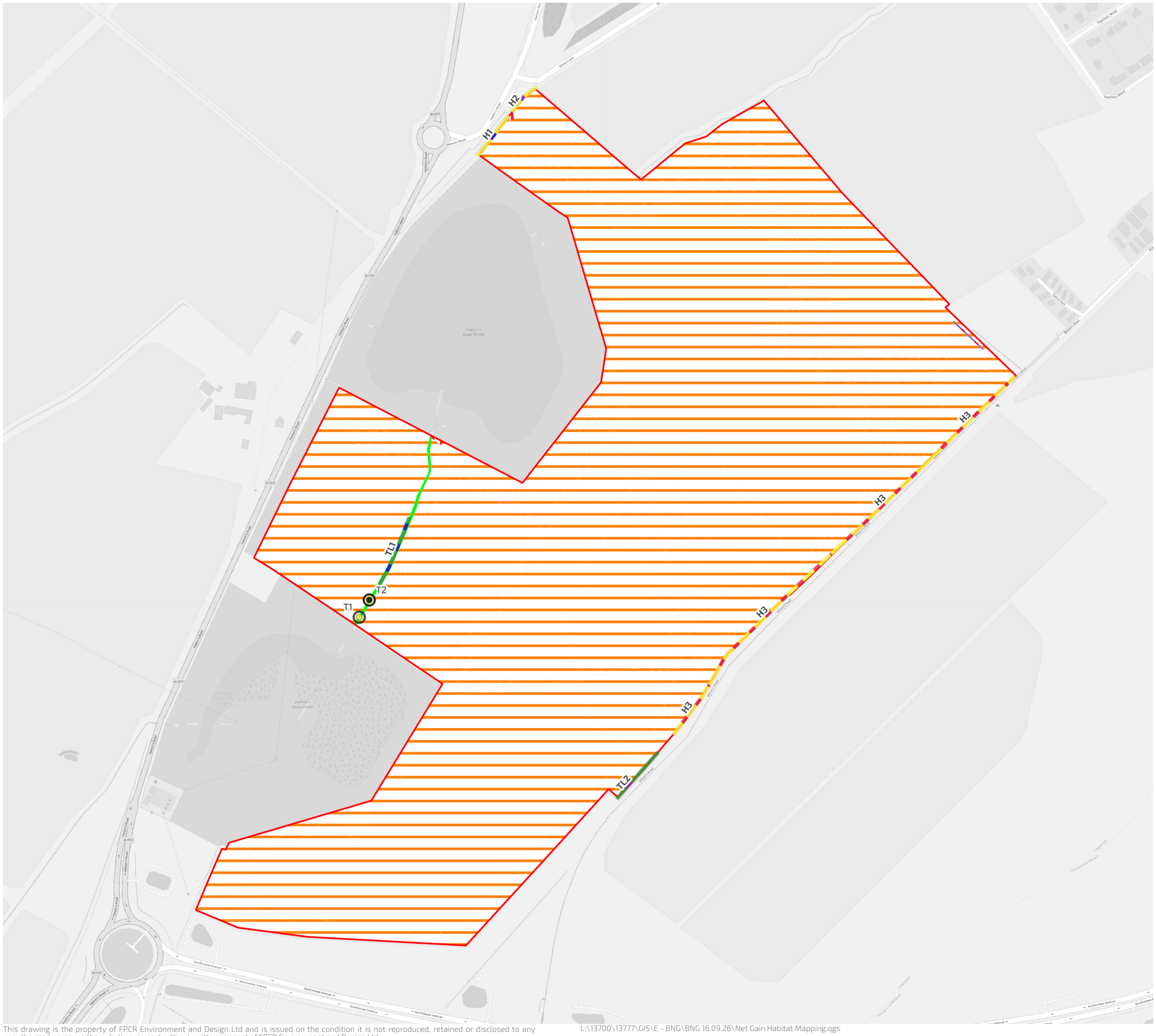
5.4 The Biodiversity Net Gain hierarchy, outlined in the Government's PPG, offers guidance on prioritising habitat avoidance, retention, and compensation for more valuable habitats. These measures should shape the Site design.

5.5 Habitat loss has mostly been restricted to low distinctiveness habitats with very limited ecological value.

5.6 Where feasible, efforts should be made to preserve hedgerows with high distinctiveness and all retained hedgerows, watercourses and trees should be buffered from built development.

Securing BNG

5.7 Further details regarding habitat creation, enhancement, and management should be provided at the detailed design stage of the proposals, where ecologists will directly input into landscape planting. A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will also be included as part of a Biodiversity Gain Plan, which, under the requirements of the Environment Act, will be submitted following receipt of full planning permission. This HMMP will detail how the creation, retention, and enhancement of habitats across the Site that significantly contribute to the Site's BNG will be managed for a minimum of 30 years.



N

0 100 200 m

Redline Boundary

Baseline Habitats

Bramble scrub

Cereal crops

Developed land; sealed surface

Modified grassland

Baseline Hedgerow

Line of trees

Line of trees - associated with bank or ditch

Native hedgerow

Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch

Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch

Baseline Individual Trees

Existing very large rural tree

Existing large rural tree

date 18/09/26

drwn/chkd EH / KDG

client
Hallam Land

project
Land at Longstanton

title
BASELINE HABITAT PLAN

scale 1:5,000 @ A3

number
FIGURE 1

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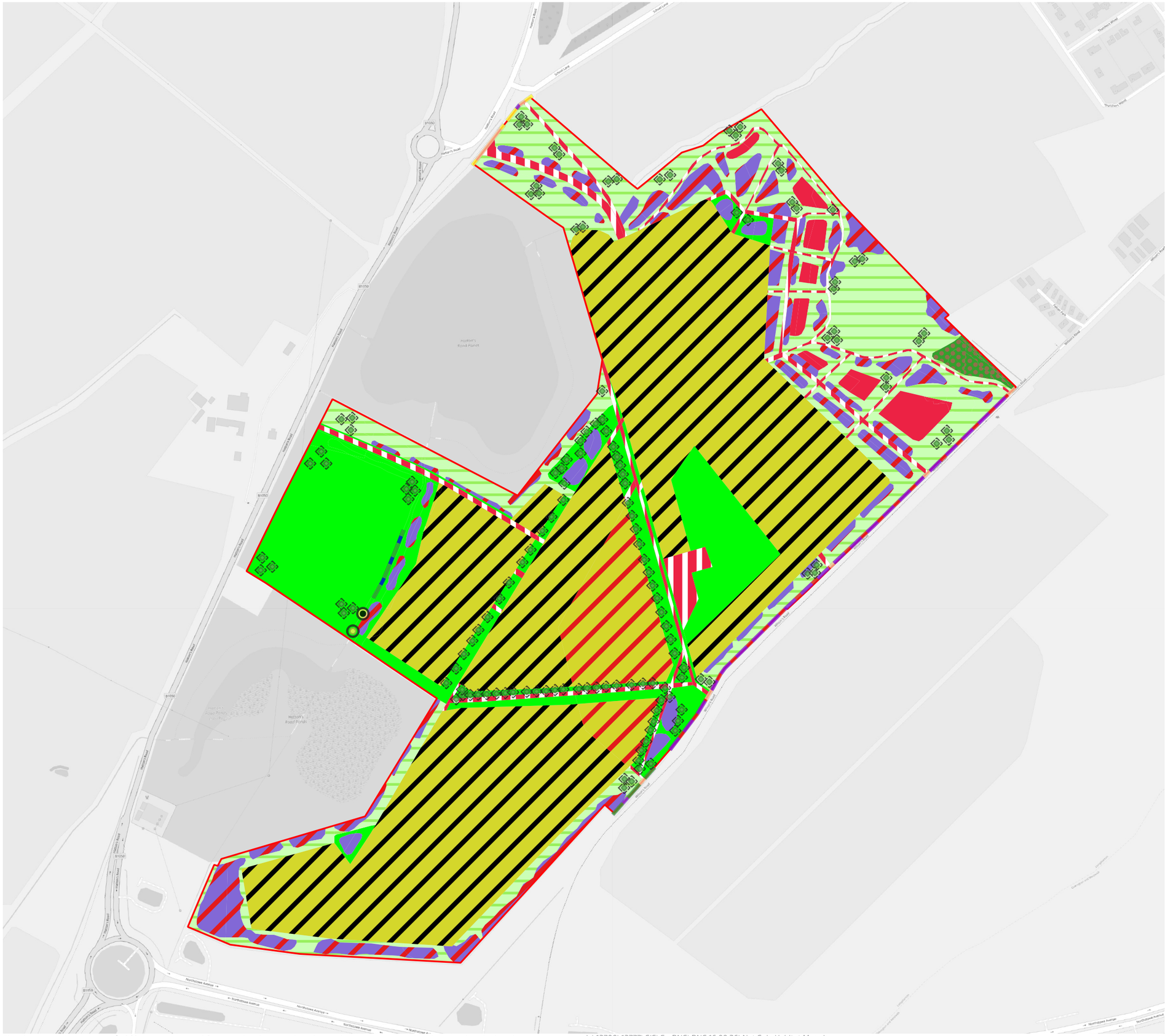
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date
18/09/26

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client
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project
Land at Longstanton

title
PROPOSED HABITAT PLAN

scale
1:5,000 @ A3

number
FIGURE 2

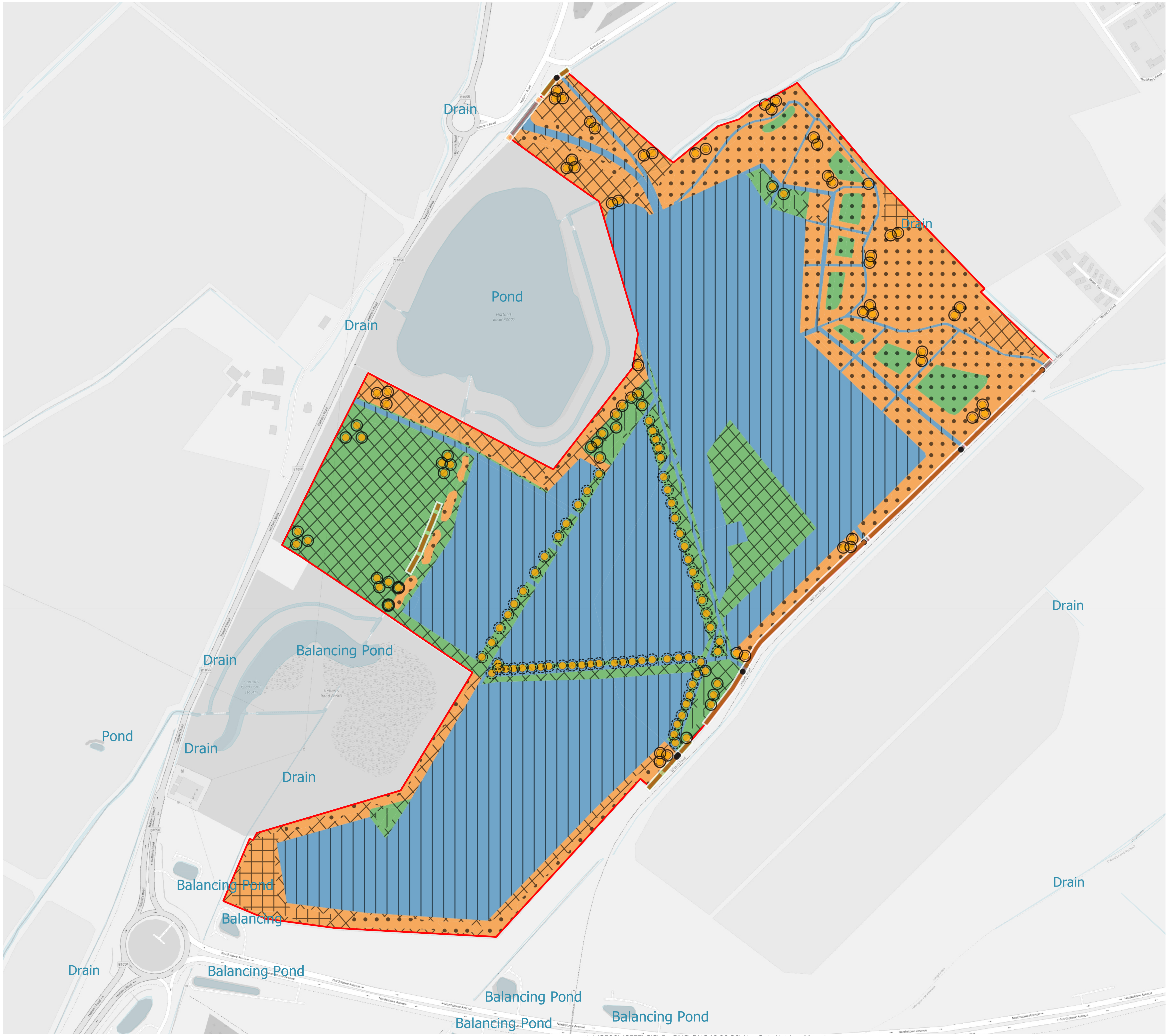
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N

0 100 200 m

- Redline Boundary
- Proposed Habitat Condition
  - Good
  - Moderate
  - Poor
  - N/A - Other
  - Condition Assessment N/A
- Proposed Habitat Distinctiveness
  - Medium
  - Low
  - V.Low
- Proposed Hedgerow Condition
  - Good
  - Moderate
  - N/A
- Proposed Hedgerow Distinctiveness
  - V.High
  - Medium
  - Low
  - N/A
- Proposed Individual Tree Condition
  - Poor
  - Moderate
  - Good
- Proposed Individual Tree Distinctiveness
  - Medium

date: 18/09/26
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client
Hallam Land

project
Land at Longstanton

title
PROPOSED HABITAT CONDITION AND DISTINCTIVENESS PLAN

scale: 1:5,000 @ A3

number
FIGURE 4

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