FUTURESECOLOGY

Yorkshire Choice Homes

115 Westfield Lane, Wyke

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Report Reference Number: FE257/BIA01

March 2023

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following report has been prepared by Futures Ecology Ltd. on behalf of Yorkshire Choice Homes. This summary report presents the results of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) calculations using the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (BM) Calculation Tool produced in respect of proposals for development of land off Westfield Lane, Wyke in West Yorkshire (central grid reference: SE 16018 26234). This has been used to inform the development design with the aim of achieving a net gain post development.

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

1.2 The application Site was c. 0.67ha in extent and was situated off Westfield Lane in the south-eastern outskirts of the village of Wyke bordering Scholes, roughly 3.17km west of Cleckheaton and 3.64km north of Brighouse. The site falls within the Kirklees Council district.

1.3 The site was comprised of mainly buildings and hardstanding, improved grassland, ornamental planting, and areas of mixed scattered trees associated with an existing residential property and garden. The boundary is made up of fencing and walls on all sides.

1.4 The landscape surrounding the site is predominantly residential to the north, east and south-east with open countryside to the west and south-west.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

1.5 The site proposals include the demolition of all built structures on site with subsequent vegetation clearance and construction of circa 15 no. residential properties with associated gardens (as per drawing no. 2023-018-001 by DK Designs). Landscaping has also been provided (R/2679/1 by FDA Landscape).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

FIELD SURVEY – HABITATS

Habitat Assessment & Biodiversity Net Gain

2.1 To inform the Biodiversity Impact Assessment, Phase 1 habitat assessments and habitat condition assessments (UK Hab) have been used from work undertaken by Futures Ecology Ltd regarding a previous application at this site and from more recent work undertaken to support the current application. An initial Phase 1 Habitat Assessment was undertaken by Futures Ecology Ltd on the 11th October 2019, with a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Report produced in February 2020. An updated survey was undertaken on 26th October 2021 and a further walkover survey undertaken on 24th

February 2023 which included habitat condition assessments for the purpose of the biodiversity net gain assessment.

2.2 This information was used to assess the habitats present on site and to fully inform the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) using the Biodiversity Metric 3.1. This information was used to adequately map the onsite habitats to inform the BIA.

2.3 The Site had recently undergone management works which included the removal of several trees and associated understorey species from the garden (introduced shrub) and woodland areas in the north and east of the site, as well as the removal of a Lawson cypress hedge along the site boundary to the southwest.

2.4 Therefore, following comments received from Callum Harrison (Kirklees Senior Planning Officer) on 3rd May 2023, the BIA baseline plans and associated information have been updated to reflect pre-clearance habitats. As such, baseline habitats and condition assessments used for the metric have been based on the assessment of habitats carried out during the 2021 surveys, prior to any clearance works. This also includes reclassifying ephemeral / short perennial habitat on former tennis courts to hardstanding.

2.5 Furthermore, six trees within the garden (introduced shrub) area (forming G1 and G2, see Tree Survey Report, James Royston, 23/02/2024), and 14 trees from the woodland area (T1-T14) have not been removed as they were subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). An additional six trees (T15-T20) within the woodland have not been removed.

2.6 The six trees within the garden (G1 and G2) have been classified as urban tree habitat within the baseline calculation and will be retained post-development.

2.7 The 20 trees within the woodland (T1-T20) have been included as part of the woodland habitat so as not to double count the units they provide.

2.8 The retained woodland trees (T1-T20) will be incorporated within the development design. However, given the spacing of the trees and that the understory has been removed, the trees can no longer be considered as woodland and therefore have been classified as created urban tree habitat within the metric with the habitat created in advance years set to 30+ years.

Extended Phase 1 Survey

2.9 Survey methodology followed guidance from Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) 2016[1] comprising a walkover of the survey area mapping (using JNCC standard habitat codes) and broadly describing and classifying the principal habitat types and other features of interest.

[1] JNCC (2016) *Handbook for Phase1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit.* ISBN 0 86139 636 7

Survey Limitations

2.10 The Phase 1 habitat surveys conducted in 2019, 2021, and 2023 were undertaken in October and February which are outside the optimal survey period for botanical identification. However, given the nature of the site, it is considered that sufficient information was gathered to enable the accurate determination of the habitats present. Furthermore, it is not considered likely that significant habitats or botanical species will have been missed.

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab)

2.11 A summary of the habitats present on site is provided within the report including UKHab equivalent habitats for the purpose of the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA).

BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (BIA)

2.12 To quantify deliverable net gain for the application, the baseline value of the habitats within the site have been calculated utilising the Biodiversity Metric 3.1.

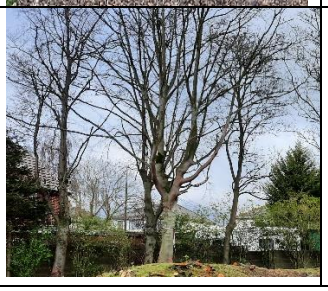
3.0 BASELINE ECOLOGY

3.1 The baseline habitats are provided on Figure 1. A summary of the habitats present during the 2021 surveys are provided in Table 1 below, including UKHab equivalent habitats for the purpose of the BIA.

Table 1: Summary of Habitats

Phase 1 Habitat Type	UK Hab (from Table G9 of BM 3.1)	Photographs	Brief Description and Conditional Assessment
Buildings	Urban: Developed land; sealed surface		Existing residential dwelling and outbuildings. Condition assessment: **N/A**
Hardstanding	Urban: Developed land; sealed surface		Hardstanding associated with the building in the north of the Site and tennis courts. Condition assessment: **N/A**

Phase 1 Habitat Type	UK Hab (from Table G9 of BM 3.1)	Photographs	Brief Description and Conditional Assessment
Introduced shrub	Urban: Introduced shrub		Ornamental shrub in garden borders. Condition assessment: **N/A**
Poor semi-improved grassland	Grassland: Modified grassland		Area of outgrown lawn in the south of the Site. Condition assessment: **Poor** Passes: 6, 7. Fails: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
Scrub – dense / continuous (mixed scrub)	Heathland and shrub: Mixed scrub		Mixed scrub in the north-western corner of the Site. Condition assessment: **Poor** Fails: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Mixed woodland	Woodland and forest: Other woodland; mixed	October 2019:  February 2023: 	Mixed non-native and native woodland with lack of diverse ground flora. Condition assessment: **Poor** Condition score: 24. (The majority of these trees have been felled, with only 20 trees remaining. Post-development, these trees will therefore be treated as urban trees with the '*habitat created in advanced years'* set to 30 years).
Line of coniferous trees	Hedge ornamental non-native	October 2019:  February 2023:	Lawson cypress hedge, approximately 5m tall. Condition assessment: **Poor** (This hedge has been removed).

Phase 1 Habitat Type	UK Hab (from Table G9 of BM 3.1)	Photographs	Brief Description and Conditional Assessment
			
Broadleaved trees	Urban tree		Four Sycamore trees (G1.1, G1.2, G1.3 and G2.3) in **Moderate** condition. To be retained. Two Lime trees (G2.1 and G2.2) in **Good** condition. To be retained.

Strategic Significance

3.2 The strategic significance of the on-site baseline habitats present was determined by whether the habitats fell within any designated sites, or national habitat networks (as identified using the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)[2]), or within any local sites, the West Yorkshire Wildlife Habitat Network (WHN), the Kirklees Strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) Network, or if it had been identified as any priority habitat, or specifically identified within the Kirklees Council local plan[3] (identified from Kirklees Local Plan Policies Map (Sheet 1 - Kirklees North)).

3.3 None of the baseline habitats fall within any designated sites, national habitat networks, local sites, the West Yorkshire WHN, the Kirklees Strategic GI Network or have been identified within the Kirklees local plan.

3.4 Therefore, all baseline habitats within the site have been assigned the strategic significance of '*Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy*'.

Baseline Summary

3.5 From the completed BM 3.1, the value of the existing on-site habitats is **1.66 Biodiversity Habitat Units** and **0.04 Hedgerow Units** (see Appendix A).

[2] www.magic.defra.gov.uk
[3] Kirklees Council (February 2019) Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies (Adopted 27 February 2019). https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-policy/local-plan.aspx Accessed: 02.03.2023.

4.0 BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 In accordance with NPPF (2021[4]) and The Environment Act (2021[5]), as well as Policy LP30 of the Kirklees Council Local Plan the aim is to generate a 10% net gain for biodiversity.

4.2 Figure 2 outlines the habitat areas post development across the site. The proposed habitats are based on the '*R/2679/1C Landscape Masterplan*' produced by FDA Landscape.

Retained Habitats

4.3 Given the size of the Site and the extent of the development, it is assumed that all on-site baseline habitats will be lost with the exception of:

- Six trees (G1 and G2): The six trees that will be retained include four sycamore trees and two lime trees. These trees have TPOs and will fall within
- 20 trees originally within woodland habitat (T1-T20). These have been included within the metric post-intervention habitats as: created urban tree habitat (see created habitat section) and with 'Habitat created in advance / years' as 30+ years, to account for these being pre-existing trees. These trees will fall within garden property post development.

Created Habitats

4.4 New habitat creation will include 15 residential dwellings with associated gardens and drives as well as road infrastructure including some verges planted up with introduced shrub. There will be 12 small urban trees planted within the gardens as well as c. 900m of beech hedge along some garden boundaries.

4.5 The residential gardens fall outside the control of the applicant and so the long-term management of these habitats will be the responsibility of the landowners. This has been considered within the BNG calculation by assigning all residential gardens including planted trees to a 'poor condition'.

4.6 A small area of native mixed scrub will be included in the south of the Site. However, as the long-term management of these habitats is not suitable for this site this habitat has been assigned to a 'poor condition'.

4.7 A right of access path will also be created onsite. This path will be used irregularly and so will be seeded with an amenity grassland mix, and given its purpose this habitat has been assigned to a 'poor condition'

[4] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (July 2021). National Planning Policy Framework. London
[5] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted

4.8 The development will retain and incorporate 20 trees that were previously part of the woodland (T1-T20). For the purpose of the metric these trees are considered as created urban tree habitat with '*habitat created in advanced years'* set at the maximum 30 years (as outlined in Paragraphs 2.3 – 2.8). The area of habitat created is based on the Root Protection Areas (RPA) provided in the Arb report. Overlapping RPAs were merged in order to avoid double counting the habitat value provided.

Post Development Summary

4.9 Post development, the on-site habitat retention and creation (Figure 2) with long-term management (for a minimum of 30 years) will achieve **1.62 Biodiversity Habitat Units** and **0.10 Hedgerow Units**, which is a total net unit change of **-0.04 Biodiversity Habitat Units** and **+0.05 Hedgerow Units.** This equates to a **-2.58% net loss in Biodiversity Habitat Units** and a **+123.13% net gain in Hedgerow Units.**

4.10 The Site does not satisfy the trading rules. The medium distinctiveness rule has not been met which requires habitat unit loss to be addressed by providing habitat units from the 'same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat'. This rule was not satisfied due to the loss of woodland and mixed scrub habitats.

4.11 As the development proposals cannot deliver a net gain on-site in habitat units, there is a requirement to secure a net gain via an alternative mechanism. This could include a combination of the following:

- Utilising off-site land under the control of the applicant to deliver the off-site requirement. The land should ideally be located in a strategic ecologically beneficial location.
- A Biodiversity Credit is calculated based on the Biodiversity Units required for the LPA or another third-party Habitat Bank (to be approved by the LPA) to take on responsibility to deliver the Net gain for biodiversity.[6]

4.12 The above calculation does not account for the following additional enhancement measures that will be provided within the development as these cannot be quantified using the Natural England BM calculator. The inclusion of the following biodiversity enhancements with what has already been outlined above would be considered a benefit to biodiversity.

- Provision of bat and bird boxes throughout the site;
- Installation of gaps for hedgehogs within boundary treatments;
- Amenity grassland lawn areas (within gardens of the residential properties) to be seeded with a flowering lawn mix such as Emorsgate EL1. The species diversity and flowers will improve the value of the habitat to invertebrates.

[6] https://www.leeds.gov.uk/planning/conservation-protection-and-heritage/achieving-net-gain-in-biodiversity-guidance-for-developers

APPENDIX A: NATURAL ENGLAND BIODIVERSITY METRIC 3.1 (BM)



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Key

- Buildings [Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
- Hardstanding [Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
- Introduced shrub [Urban: Introduced scrub]
- SI Poor semi-improved grassland [Grassland: Modified grassland]
- Scrub - dense/continuous [Heathland and shrub: Mixed scrub]
- Mixed woodland - plantation [Woodland and forest: Other woodland; broadleaved]
- Hedges: Introduced shrub [Non-native and ornamental hedgerow]
- Wall
- Dry stone wall
- Fence
- Broadleaved tree

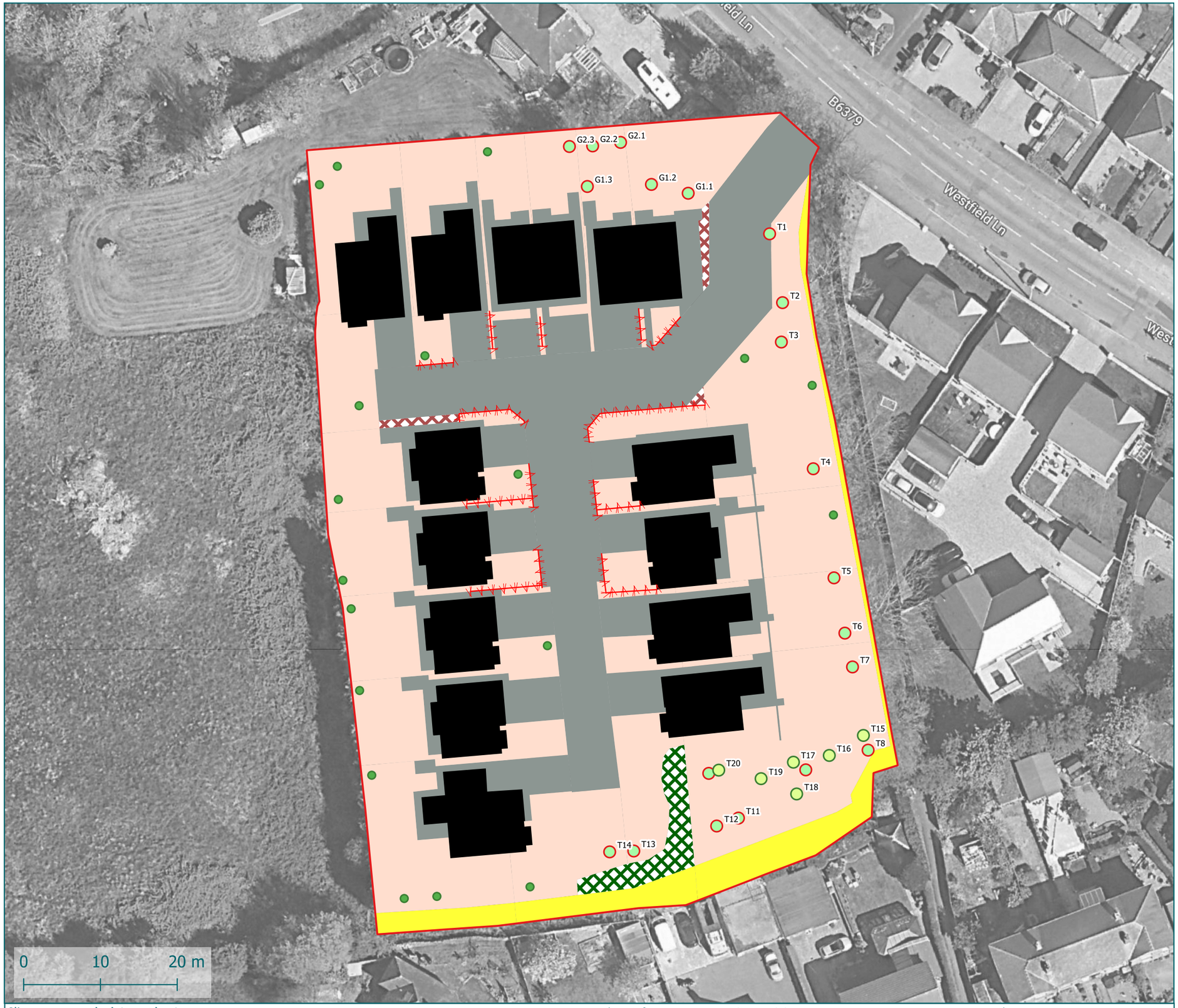
Note:
The site has been recently managed. This includes the removal of the row of coniferous trees to the southwest and the clearance of the woodland to the east (with the exception of 20 trees (T1-T20)).

The baseline habitats shown are based upon previous visits to the site in 2021 pre-mangament. Therefore, the habitat type and condtions from the 2021 visit has been applied for the purpose of the BNG assessment.

Client:	Yorkshire Choice Homes	Plan Reference:	FE257_01	Author:	JH
Project:	115 Westfield Lane, Wyke	Project Reference:	FE257	Date:	14/6/2023
Title:	Figure 1 - Baseline Habitat Plan	Report Reference:	BIA01	Scale:	1:500

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Key

Proposed Habitats

- Buildings [Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
- Hardstanding [Urban: Developed land; sealed surface]
- Gardens (lawn and planting) [Urban: vegetated garden]
- Introduced shrub [Urban: Introduced scrub]
- Cultivated/disturbed land - Amenity grassland [Grassland: Modified grassland]
- Scrub - dense/continuous [Heathland and shrub: Mixed scrub]
- Hedges: Introduced shrub [Hedge Ornamental Non Native]
- Small urban tree
- Retained tree (TPO)
- Retained tree (non-TPO)

Client:	Yorkshire Choice Homes	Plan Reference:	FE257_02	Author:	JH
Project:	115 Westfield Lane, Wyke	Project Reference:	FE257	Date:	12/6/2023
Title:	Figure 2 - Proposed Habitat Plan	Report Reference:	BIA01	Scale:	1:500

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