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NATURAL PROGRESSION

Land at Stevenage Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

January 2026

Land at Stevenage Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Client:	Bugler Homes Limited	
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0 Executive Summary

- 0.1.1 Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development which leaves the natural environment in a better state than beforehand. Defra has published a metric by which the biodiversity losses and gains associated with a particular development can be calculated. Urban Edge Environmental Consulting was commissioned by Bugler Homes Ltd ('the Applicant') to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric for the site of a proposed residential development at Land at Stevenage Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire.
- 0.1.2 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The objective is for developers to deliver a 10% gain in biodiversity value. This means a development will result in more or better quality natural habitat than there was pre-development.
- 0.1.3 Policy SP12: Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 states that: "*We will accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring the natural environment is protected and enhanced...*".
- 0.1.4 The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has been carried out using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric which uses habitats as a proxy for wider biodiversity. Pre-intervention biodiversity unit calculations were informed by a walkover site visits on 15 July 2024 and 14 October 2025 to establish the habitat parcels present within the survey area, their size and condition. Post-intervention biodiversity units were calculated based upon the Proposed Site Layout Plan.
- 0.1.5 There is a calculated **net gain of +6.99 habitat units, equivalent to +83.15%**, associated with the current development proposals.
- 0.1.6 There is a calculated **net gain of +0.28 hedgerow units, equivalent to +16.39%**, associated with the current development proposals.
- 0.1.7 The Proposed Development therefore complies with the current requirements for the achievement of net gain, including compliance with the trading rules.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 Urban Edge Environmental Consulting (UEEC) has been commissioned by Bugler Homes Ltd ('the Applicant') to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for the site of a proposed residential development at Land at Stevenage Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire (Grid Reference: TL 20162 27939).
- 1.1.2 The Application Site lies between the towns of Stevenage and Hitchin, in the North Hertfordshire District of Hertfordshire. It comprises c.4.15ha of undeveloped land, currently dominated by a large hay meadow of modified grassland, with boundary hedgerows. The extent of the Application Site is outlined on Figure 1.1.

1.2 Proposed Construction Activities

- 1.2.1 The survey area was surveyed in order to assess its suitability for development. The proposals would include the erection of 50no. residential dwellings (including affordable housing), new public open space, associated parking, landscaping and access. A Proposed Site Layout Plan for the Proposed Development is shown at Figure 1.2.

1.3 Biodiversity Net Gain and the Defra Metric

- 1.3.1 Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth; it includes all living things and the places in which they live. It is essential to sustain our society, well-being and economy. Biodiversity in the UK and internationally is declining as it comes under increasing pressure from development and land management practices. Enhancing biodiversity is integral to sustainable development, and BNG is an approach to development which leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand.
- 1.3.2 In 2023 Defra published the Statutory Biodiversity Metric ('the Metric') (Natural England, 2024a), which has subsequently been updated. The metric provides a means of evaluating biodiversity losses and gains through development in a robust and consistent manner. The metric enforces the mitigation hierarchy whereby impacts to biodiversity should first be avoided, then minimised and mitigated, before being compensated where losses cannot be avoided. The Metric calculates the biodiversity value of a site before and after development to establish the change in biodiversity attributable to a particular development project.

Stevenage Road,
Hitchin,
Hertfordshire

 Application site

Figure 1.1: Site location plan



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Scale (at A4): 1:5,000 Created by: MT

Date: Jan 2026 Reviewed by: NP

Drawing number:

UE0681ECO-StevenageRoad: Site location: 260127





Figure 1.2: Proposed Site Layout Plan

2 Policy Background

2.1 National Planning Policy

2.1.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; MHCLG, 2024) advocates biodiversity and environmental gains¹ in the following paragraphs:

- ▶ Paragraph 125: *“Planning policies and decisions should a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land...and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains - such as developments that would enable new habitat creation...”*
- ▶ Paragraph 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 and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.”*
- ▶ Paragraph 188: *“Plans should...plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries”*
- ▶ Paragraph 192: *“To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should b)...pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”*
- ▶ Paragraph 193: *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles d)...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.”*

2.1.2 The Government’s ‘25 Year Environment Plan’ (HMG, 2018) set out a policy ambition to consult on mandatory BNG for development and to embed environmental net gain principle into the planning system. A Defra consultation on mandatory BNG, advocating a minimum of 10% BNG for all development, took place in December 2018² with the responses published in July 2019³. The Environment Act 2021 mandates a minimum of 10% BNG for all development.

2.1.3 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The objective is for developers to deliver a 10% gain in biodiversity value. This means a development will result in more or better quality natural habitat than there was pre-development.

¹ Environmental gains extend beyond biodiversity gains to also include social, economic, amenity and natural capital gains.

² Defra (2018): *Net Gain – Consultation proposals*. Available online: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/net-gain/>.

³ Defra (2019): *Net Gain – Summary of responses and government response*. Available online:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819823/net-gain-consult-sum-resp.pdf.

2.2 Local Planning Policy

2.2.1 Adopted Policy SP12: Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity of the *North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031* (North Herts Council, 2022) states, among other things, that:

“We will accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring the natural environment is protected and enhanced. We will:

a) Protect, identify, manage and where possible enhance a strategic multi-functional network of green infrastructure;

...

d) Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity networks including wildlife corridors, ancient woodlands and hedgerows, wetland and riverine habitats, Local Geological Sites, protected species, priority species and habitats, and non-designated sites of ecological value and ensure measurable net gains for biodiversity;....”

3 Methodology

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The BNG assessment has been carried out using the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric and accompanying *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide* (Natural England, 2024b). The Metric uses habitats as a proxy for wider biodiversity with different habitat types scored according to their relative biodiversity value. This value is then adjusted depending on the condition and location of the habitat, to calculate 'Biodiversity Units' (BU) for the specific development site. Pre-intervention BU are subtracted from the post-intervention BU to determine the change in biodiversity value attributable to the development.

3.1.2 There are four key steps to using the Metric which are illustrated in Figure 3.1 and described further in the following sections.

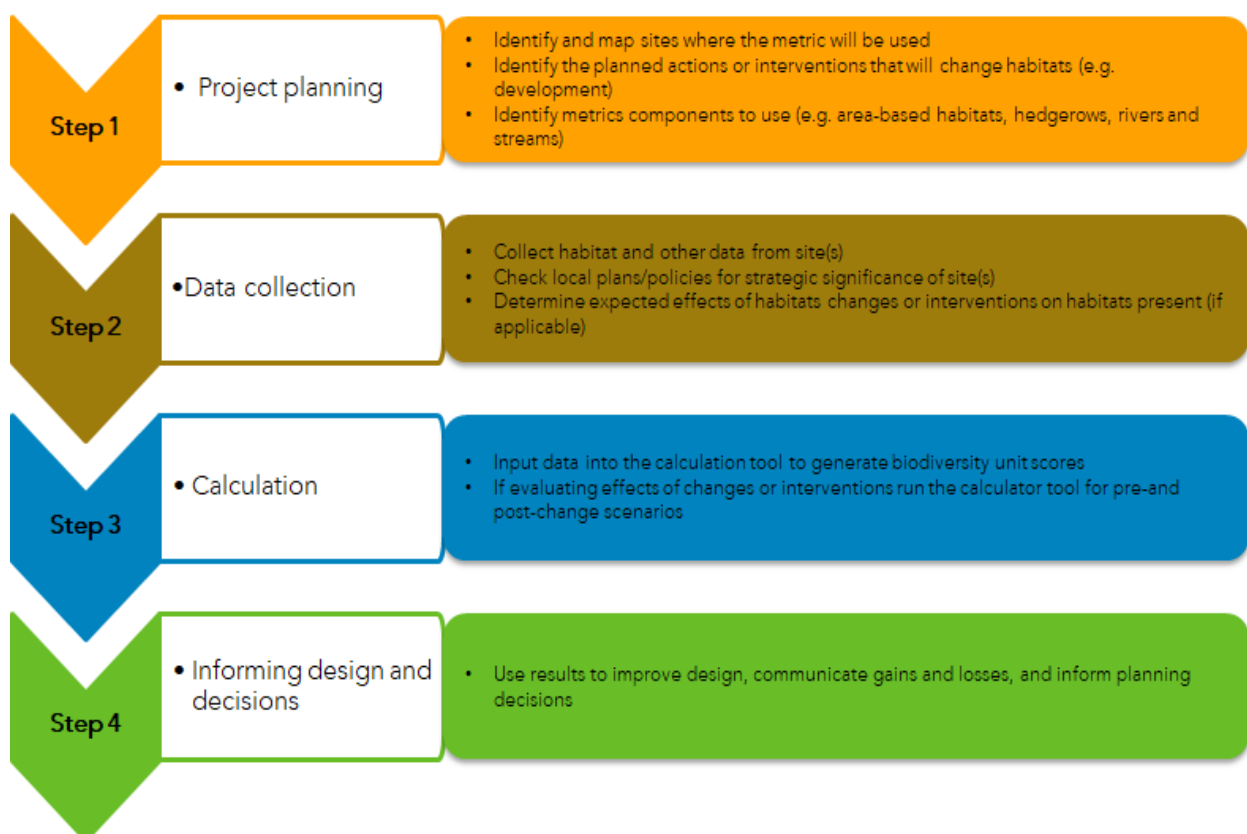


Figure 3.1: Key Steps to Apply the Defra Metric

3.2 Project Planning (Step 1)

3.2.1 The development site for which the BNG assessment has been undertaken includes the red line boundary shown on Figure 1.1. The Proposed Site Layout Plan for the Proposed Development is

shown at Figure 1.2 and includes the proposed interventions for the site as described in Section 1. The existing habitats within the development site include habitat and hedgerow units and therefore these components of the Metric have been fully applied, as discussed further below.

3.3 Data Collection (Step 2)

Pre-development habitats

- 3.3.1 UEEC deployed suitably experienced ecologists on 15 July 2024 and 14 October 2025 to identify the habitats according to the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The site was divided into land parcels, based on the different habitats present. For each habitat, lists of plant species (where applicable) were also recorded, as well as an indication of their relative frequency and abundance (using the DAFOR⁴ scale). The divergence from this methodology is in relation to individual trees, whereby these features are recorded and mapped separately from the baseline habitat that they sit within; and hedgerows which follow the classification methodology outlined within *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide* (Natural England, 2024), in addition to collecting data relevant to each condition assessment sheet from within *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology* (Natural England, 2024c).
- 3.3.2 Annotated field maps were then digitised in ArcGIS Pro to produce the UKHab Pre-development plan shown at Appendix I. Each habitat polygon was clipped to the red line planning application boundary, and its area then calculated in GIS and exported to MS Excel for use in BNG baseline calculations. The size of each habitat parcel was recorded in hectares (ha) or kilometres (km). Each habitat parcel was assigned a condition score of Low, Medium or High, informed by the site survey and condition assessment sheets.

Post-development habitats

- 3.3.3 The expected effects of habitat changes and interventions on existing habitats were established based upon the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Figure 1.2) and liaison with the client team. The Proposed Site Layout Plan was imported into ArcGIS Pro, and each proposed habitat area / length was calculated and exported to MS Excel for use in BNG post-development calculations. Each habitat parcel / length was assigned a target condition score of Low, Medium or High, informed by conversations with the landscape architect, professional judgement and the relevant condition assessment sheets.

3.4 Calculation (Step 3)

Calculation Tool

- 3.4.1 The Metric is accompanied by a calculation tool which uses a number of input fields in order to calculate pre- and post-intervention biodiversity units, including:
- ▶ **Habitat types:** As described in the UK Habitat Classification System.

⁴ D – Dominant; A – Abundant; F – Frequent; O – Occasional; R – Rare.

- ▶ **Area of habitats and length of hedgerows:** In hectares and kilometres.
 - ▶ **Habitat condition:** Parcels of habitat will be in different ecological conditions. In addition, interventions to improve habitats will not always involve taking a habitat in poor condition and improving it to good condition. The metric therefore takes account of variants in habitat condition.
 - ▶ **Strategic significance:** The idea of strategic significance works at a landscape scale. It gives additional unit value to habitats that are located in preferred locations for biodiversity and other environmental objectives as set out in published local plans.
- 3.4.2 Habitat type, area / length and condition were established via the site survey and condition assessment described in section 3.3.
- 3.4.3 The Calculation Tool also includes a number of pre-assigned fields which are automatically populated based on habitat type inputs:
- ▶ **Habitat distinctiveness:** Based on an assessment of the distinguishing features of a habitat or linear feature, including the consideration of species richness, rarity (at local, regional, national and international scales), and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats.
 - ▶ **Risk multipliers (Post-intervention only):** Two different risks are recognised in the Metric: difficulty of habitat creation and restoration; and temporal risk i.e. the time it takes for a newly created habitat to reach target condition.

Calculation of Biodiversity Units

- 3.4.4 Using the factors described above, equivalent BU were calculated for the development site pre- and post-intervention. No offsite habitat creation or enhancement is currently proposed.
- 3.4.5 The following formula was used to calculate the change in BU as a consequence of the Proposed Development:

$$\text{POST-INTERVENTION BIODIVERSITY UNITS} - \text{PRE-INTERVENTION BIODIVERSITY UNITS} = \text{CHANGE IN BIODIVERSITY UNITS}$$

- 3.4.6 Where the resulting score is negative there is a net loss in biodiversity. If the score is zero, there is no net loss in biodiversity. Where the resulting score is positive, there is a net gain in biodiversity.

3.5 Informing Design and Decisions (Step 4)

- 3.5.1 In this case, the scheme layout was designed following detailed liaising with the landscaping team. This ensured that BNG was considered during the design phase and landscaping plans were constructed to maximise the potential for on-site gains. The BNG calculations therefore provide an overview of realistic net gains or losses resulting from the scheme.

Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

3.5.2 The Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy (Articles 37A and 37D of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) sets out the process that should be followed when planning development in order to reduce its impact on medium, high and very high distinctiveness habitats. In summary this comprises:

- ▶ First, avoid adverse effects of the development on medium, high and very high distinctiveness habitats and, if they cannot be avoided, the mitigation of those effects;
- ▶ Then, for all onsite habitats which are adversely affected by the development, the adverse effect should be compensated by prioritising in order, where possible:
 1. the enhancement of existing onsite habitats
 2. creation of new onsite habitats
 3. allocation of registered offsite gains; and finally
 4. the purchase of biodiversity credits.

3.5.3 In this case the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy has been applied as follows:

- ▶ The layout has been designed to retain and protect all the highest distinctiveness habitat within the Application Site (medium distinctiveness hedgerow), with only low distinctiveness grassland habitat lost;
- ▶ Losses of modified grassland will be compensated for and surpassed by the creation of c.1.4226ha of other neutral grassland in moderate condition;
- ▶ c.0.0834km of native hedgerows will be planted as part of the Proposed Development to achieve the required uplift in biodiversity units.

Other On-site Enhancements

3.5.4 The following additional enhancements are included as part of the proposals:

- ▶ Creation of c.0.2087ha of other woodland; broadleaved;
- ▶ Creation of c.0.0853ha of modified grassland;
- ▶ Creation of c.0.0733ha of other neutral grassland in poor condition;
- ▶ Creation of c.0.0657ha of mixed scrub;
- ▶ Creation of c.0.0444ha of introduced shrub; and
- ▶ Planting of 183 urban trees (native and non-native) within publicly managed areas.

3.6 Assumptions and Limitations

3.6.1 The Application Site boundary was amended following the survey on 14 October 2025. This is not considered a limitation, as the additional modified grassland now within the Application Site, was assessed during the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (UEEC, 2025). However, the strip of other neutral grassland along the southern boundary was not assessed during this survey and has thus

been designated as this habitat type and in good condition, on a realistic worst case basis. In any case, this area of habitat will be retained and protected as part of the Proposed Development.

- 3.6.2 Following the change in the Application Site boundary, the habitats associated with the northern boundary, within the Post-development Plan, have been extended upwards to match this change. This includes hedgerow H1, which remains along the northern boundary. Due to the linear nature of this habitat type, the adjacent modified grassland pre-intervention, and vegetated garden, other woodland; broadleaved and other neutral grassland post-intervention, have been extended to fill the footprint of the hedgerow.
- 3.6.3 The Proposed Site Layout Plan only shows the habitats on site following the Proposed Development. The net gain assessment has been calculated based upon assumptions regarding the condition of each habitat created to give an indication of the likely biodiversity gain / loss post-development. Finalised management proposals to achieve the proposed condition of habitats, will need to be prepared prior to development of the site.
- 3.6.4 All newly planted Urban trees plotted on the UKHab Post-development Plan have been assumed as 'Small' within the Metric. Proposed trees which fall within the private garden areas are not included within the calculation.
- 3.6.5 See Appendix VII for general Legal and Technical Limitations which apply to this document.

4 Results

- 4.1.1 The pre-development habitats were digitised in accordance with UKHab for use in the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric, as shown in Appendix I. Appendix II shows the post-development habitats using UKHab classifications, based upon the Proposed Site Layout Plan. The data used to inform the condition assessments for the habitats pre- and post-development are provided in Appendix III to Appendix VI.
- 4.1.2 The extract overleaf from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Calculation Tool illustrates the headline results for the proposed development. This shows that with the implementation of the Proposed Site Layout Plan and achievement of the condition of the proposed habitats, the development proposals will achieve:
- ▶ A **net gain of +6.99 habitat units, equivalent to +83.15%;** and
 - ▶ A **net gain of +0.28 hedgerow units, equivalent to +16.39%.**
- 4.1.3 The Proposed Development therefore complies with the current requirements for the achievement of net gain, including compliance with the trading rules.

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	8.41
	Hedgerow units	1.70
	Watercourse units	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	15.39
	Hedgerow units	1.98
	Watercourse units	0.00
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	6.99
	Hedgerow units	0.28
	Watercourse units	0.00
Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	6.99
	Hedgerow units	0.28
	Watercourse units	0.00
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area habitat units	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	6.99
	Hedgerow units	0.28
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	83.15%
	Hedgerow units	16.39%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

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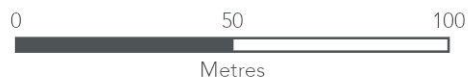
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Appendix I: UKHab Pre-development Plan

Stevenage Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

-  Site boundary
-  Grassland - Modified grassland
-  Grassland - Other neutral grassland
-  Urban - Developed land, sealed surface
-  Hedgerow - Native hedgerow
-  Hedgerow - Native hedgerow with trees



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Scale (at A4): 1:1,750 Created by: MT

Date: Jan 2026 Reviewed by: NP

Drawing number:

UE0681ECO-StevenageRoad: PreDevHabitats: 260123



Appendix II: UKHab Post-development Plan

Stevenage Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

-  Site boundary
-  Modified grassland
-  Other neutral grassland - good
-  Other neutral grassland - moderate
-  Other neutral grassland - poor
-  Mixed scrub
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Developed land, sealed surface
-  Introduced shrub
-  Vegetated garden
-  Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved
-  Native hedgerow
-  Native hedgerow with trees
-  Non-native urban trees
-  Native urban trees



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Scale (at A4): 1:1,750 Created by: MT

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Drawing number:

UE0681ECO-StevenageRoad: PostDevHabitats: 260127



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Appendix III: Pre-development Habitat Condition Sheets (Area baseline)

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)		
Grassland - Modified grassland		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	N
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 vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	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.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		N
Number of criteria passed		5
Condition Assessment Result		Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Good (3)

Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	✓
Notes		
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).		

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high & very high distinctiveness)		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)		
Grassland - Other neutral grassland		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
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).¹ Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Y
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
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens ² .	Y
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Y
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁵) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Y

Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types		
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Y
Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		Y
Number of criteria passed		7
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)	✓
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	
Notes		
Footnote 1 - Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover. Footnote 3 - Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type include: creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site. Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement. Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).		

Appendix IV: Post-development Habitat Condition Sheets (Area creation)

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high & very high distinctiveness)		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)		
Grassland - Other neutral grassland (poor condition)		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
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).¹ Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Y
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.	N
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens ² .	Y
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Y
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁵) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Y
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types		
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	N
Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		N
Number of criteria passed		4
Condition Assessment Result		Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.		Good (3)

Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)	✓
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	
Notes		
Footnote 1 - Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description.		
Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover.		
Footnote 3 - Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type include: creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> . There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site.		
Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement.		
Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).		

Condition Sheet: WOODLAND Habitat Type					
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)					
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved					
Condition Assessment Criteria					
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes ¹ present.	Two age-classes ¹ present.	One age-class ¹ present.	1
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland ² .	3
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species ³ present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, other invasive species ³ <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ³ >10% cover.	3
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species ⁴ found	Two or less native tree or shrub species ⁴ across woodland parcel.	3

			across woodland parcel.		
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	2
F	Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted ⁷ .	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ .	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category ⁷ .	3
G	Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland ⁸ ; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland ⁸ .	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland ⁸ .	1
H	Tree health	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback ⁹ .	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	3
I	Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	1
J	Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland ¹¹ .	Two storeys across all survey plots ¹¹ .	One or less storey across all survey plots ¹¹ .	1
K	Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees ¹² per hectare.	One veteran tree ¹² per hectare.	No veteran trees ¹² present in woodland.	1

L	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	1
M	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident ¹⁴ .	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	3
Total Score (out of a possible 39)					26
Condition Assessment Result			Condition Assessment Score		Result Achieved
Total score >32 (33 to 39)			Good (3)		
Total score 26 to 32			Moderate (2)		✓
Total score <26 (13 to 25)			Poor (1)		
Footnotes					
Footnotes below refer to the EWBG woodland condition assessment details: EWBG (No date). <i>Assessing your Woodland's Condition</i> [online]. Available from: Woodland Wildlife Toolkit (sylvia.org.uk) The woodland condition assessment survey methodology is outlined in the EWBG toolkit. However the criteria on this sheet are those specific to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and must be used when assessing woodland condition. Footnote 1 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 1 for more information. If tree species is not a birch <i>Betula</i> sp., cherry <i>Prunus</i> sp. or <i>Sorbus</i> sp.: 0 - 20 years (Young); 21 - 150 years (Intermediate); and >150 years (Old). For birch, cherry or <i>Sorbus</i> species; 0 - 20 years = Young; 21 - 60 years =Intermediate; >60 years = Old. A recognisable age-class should be a consistent recognisable layer across the woodland or stand being assessed. Presence of a few saplings would not indicate that the woodland has an 'age-class' of young trees. Footnote 2 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 2 for more information. Browsing pressure is considered to be significant where >20% of vegetation visible within each survey plot shows damage from any type of browsing pressure listed. Footnote 3 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 3 for more information. Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly. Check for the presence of all plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), particularly the following invasive non-native species: American skunk cabbage <i>Lysichiton americanus</i>; Himalayan balsam <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>; Japanese knotweed <i>Reynoutria japonica</i>; cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>; shallon <i>Gaultheria shallon</i>; snowberry <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>; variegated yellow archangel <i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i> subsp. <i>argentatum</i>; rhododendron					

Rhododendron ponticum; and tree-of-heaven *Alianthus altissima*.

Footnote 4 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 4 and Table 2 for more information. The number of different native tree or shrub species including young trees and shrubs. A list of commonly found native tree and shrub species is provided in Table 2. Not all species listed are native to all parts of the UK. Note a list of commonly found non-native tree species are also included and should be recorded if present.

Footnote 5 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 5 and for more information. The abundance of native tree species in upper (>5 m) and understorey (up to 5 m) layers including young trees and shrubs.

Footnote 6 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 6 for more information. Open space within woodland in this context is temporary open space in which trees can be expected to regenerate (for example, glades, rides, footpaths, areas of clear-fell). This differs from permanent open space where tree regeneration is not possible or desirable (for example, tarmac, buildings, rivers). Area is at least 10 m wide with less than 20% covered by shrubs or trees.

Footnote 7 – Given the increased ratio of edge habitat to woodland where the woodland is <10ha.

Footnote 8 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 8 for more information. This indicator measures regeneration potential of the woodland by considering three classes: seedlings; saplings; and young trees of 4-7 cm DBH. All three classes would fall in the 'young' category of the 'age distribution of trees' indicator, but the regeneration indicator gathers additional information by considering regeneration potential - if seedlings, saplings and young trees are all present that means natural regeneration processes are happening.

Footnote 9 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 9 for more information and Table 3 for a list of diseases and pests and their risk level.

Footnote 10 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 10 directing to NVC key for more information. The 'UKHab to NVC translation table' in the UK Habitat Classification resources may also be useful to assess this.

Footnote 11 – This criterion looks at structural diversity and is useful to understand in conjunction with the age of trees in a woodland. Vertical structure is defined as the number of canopy storeys present. Possible storey values are: 1) Upper; 2) Complex: recorded when the stand is composed of multiple tree heights that cannot easily be stratified into broad height bands (such as upper, middle or lower); 3) Middle; 4) Lower; and 5) Shrub layer. There might be no storeys where the woodland has been felled. See EWBG INDICATOR 11 for more information.

Footnote 12 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 12 for more information. See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from:

[Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/Keepers_of_time_-_ancient_and_native_woodland_and_trees_policy_in_England.pdf) and:

[Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/Ancient_woodland,_ancient_trees_and_veteran_trees_advice_for_making_planning_decisions.pdf)

Footnote 13 – See EWBG method INDICATOR 13 for more information. This includes logs, large dead branches on the forest floor and stumps (<1 m tall) >20 cm diameter at narrowest point and >50 cm long. Also includes standing dead trees (>1 m tall) and also deadwood on standing live trees. Diameter is measured at the narrowest point on the stem. Minimum diameter of 20 cm.

Footnote 14 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 15 for more information. Examples of disturbance are: significant nutrient enrichment; soil compaction from trampling, machinery, animal poaching or litter.

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)		
Grassland - Modified grassland		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	N
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 vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	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.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		N
Number of criteria passed		5
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	✓

Notes
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high & very high distinctiveness)		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)		
Grassland - Other neutral grassland (poor condition)		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
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).¹ Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	N
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.	N
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens ² .	Y
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Y
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁵) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Y
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types		
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	N

Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		N
Number of criteria passed		3
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)	
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	✓
Notes		
Footnote 1 - Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover. Footnote 3 - Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type include: creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site. Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement. Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).		

Condition Sheet: SCRUB Habitat Type		
Habitat Type		
Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range). ¹ - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species ² , - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> , sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , which can be up to 100% cover)."	Y
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran) ³ shrubs are all present.	N
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁵) and species indicative of sub-optimal condition ⁶ make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Y

D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	N
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	N
Number of criteria passed		2
Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)		Score Achieved x/√
Passes 5 criteria		Good (3)
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)
		✓
Notes		
Footnote 1 – Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description. Footnote 2 – Native woody species as defined and listed in the Hedgerow Survey Handbook: DEFRA (2007) Hedgerow Survey Handbook: A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK. 2nd ed. [online]. Defra, London. PB1195. Available from: Hedgerow Survey Handbook (publishing.service.gov.uk). Footnote 3 – See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran species. Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk) and Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Footnote 6 – Species indicative of sub-optimal condition for this habitat type may include: non-native conifers, tree-of-heaven <i>Alianthus altissima</i>, holm oak <i>Quercus ilex</i>, European turkey oak <i>Quercus cerris</i>, cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>, snowberry <i>Symphoricarpos</i> spp., shallon <i>Gaultheria shallon</i>, American skunk cabbage <i>Lysichiton americanus</i>, buddleia <i>Buddleja</i> spp., cotoneaster <i>Cotoneaster</i> spp., Spanish bluebell <i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i> and hybrid bluebells <i>Hyacinthoides x massartiana</i>. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site.		

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type			
Habitat Types			
Individual trees – Urban trees			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed	
		Yes	No
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Native specimens	Non-native specimens
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	All	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .		All

D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.		All
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.		All
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	All	
Number of criteria passed		3 – Native specimens / 2 – Non-native specimens	
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score	Score achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)	Native specimens
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)	Non-native specimens
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.			
Notes			
Footnote 1 – See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk) and Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Footnote 2 – Enhancement of this habitat type is only possible by improving the habitat so that it meets all Criteria B, D and F. It is not possible or appropriate to enhance individual tree/s through meeting just one or two of those Criteria, nor by meeting Criteria A, C or E.			

Appendix V: Pre-development Habitat Condition Sheets (Hedgerow baseline)

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types					
Habitat Type					
Native hedgerow Species-rich native hedgerow with trees					
Condition Assessment Criteria					
A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook ¹ and Favourable Conservation Status document ² . For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the ‘favourable condition’ criteria.					
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes					
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)		Criteria (the minimum requirements for ‘favourable condition’	Description	Criterion passed	
				Yes	No
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types					
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	H1, H2	
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	H1, H2	

			suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).		
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	H1	H2
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	H1, H2	
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and - is present on one side of the hedge (at least)	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground	H1, H2	

			etc. can limit available habitat niches.		
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	H1, H2	
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .	H1, H2	
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (e.g., excessive hedgerow cutting).	H1, H2	
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only					
E1.	class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient ⁸), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.	H1	
E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.	H1	

		or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.			
The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.					
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees					
Category	Category Requirements			Metric Score	
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.			3	
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).			2	
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).			1	
Score achieved:				3 – H2 / 2 – H1	
Notes					
Footnote 1 – DEFRA (2007) Hedgerow Survey Handbook. A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK. [online] Available on: layout (hedgeline.org.uk)					
Footnote 2 – STALEY, J.T. ET AL. (2020) Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows. [online] Available on: Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows - RP2943 (naturalengland.org.uk)					
Footnote 3 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).					
Footnote 4 – CHEFFINGS, C. M. et al. (2005) The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain. Species Status 7: 1-116. [online] Available on: The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (Species Status No. 7) JNCC Resource Hub					
Footnote 5 – BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND (BSBI). Definitions: wild, native or alien? [online] Available on: Definitions: wild, native or alien? – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (bsbi.org)					
Footnote 6 – BSBI and Biological Records Centre (BRC) (2022) Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora. [online] Available on: Acknowledgements Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora (brc.ac.uk)					
Footnote 7 – GB NON-NATIVE SPECIES SECRETARIAT (GBNNSS) (2022) Available on: Home » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org)					
Footnote 8 – See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk) and Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)					

Appendix VI: Post-development Habitat Condition Sheets (Hedgerow creation)

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types				
Habitat Type				
Native hedgerow				
Condition Assessment Criteria				
A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook¹ and Favourable Conservation Status document². For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the ‘favourable condition’ criteria.				
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes				
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)		Criteria (the minimum requirements for ‘favourable condition’	Description	Condition Achieved (Yes or No)
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				
A1	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	Y
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height.	N

			Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	Y
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Y
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and - is present on one side of the hedge (at least)	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	N
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or	Y

			together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .	N
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (e.g., excessive hedgerow cutting).	Y
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only				
E1.	class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient ⁸), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.	N/A
E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.	N/A

The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.		
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees		
Category	Category Requirements	Metric Score
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).	2
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1
Score achieved:		2 = Moderate
Notes		
Footnote 1 – DEFRA (2007) Hedgerow Survey Handbook. A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK. [online] Available on: layout (hedgelinek.org.uk) Footnote 2 – STALEY, J.T. ET AL. (2020) Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows. [online] Available on: Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows - RP2943 (naturalengland.org.uk) Footnote 3 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Footnote 4 – CHEFFINGS, C. M. et al. (2005) The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain. Species Status 7: 1-116. [online] Available on: The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (Species Status No. 7) JNCC Resource Hub Footnote 5 – BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND (BSBI). Definitions: wild, native or alien? [online] Available on: Definitions: wild, native or alien? – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (bsbi.org) Footnote 6 – BSBI and Biological Records Centre (BRC) (2022) Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora. [online] Available on: Acknowledgements Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora (brc.ac.uk) Footnote 7 – GB NON-NATIVE SPECIES SECRETARIAT (GBNNS) (2022) Available on: Home » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org) Footnote 8 – See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk) and Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)		

Appendix VII: Legal and Technical Limitations

- This report has been prepared by Urban Edge Environmental Consulting Ltd (UEEC Ltd) with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the contract made with the Client to undertake this work, and taking into account the information made available by the Client. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by us.
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- The advice provided in this report does not constitute legal advice. As such, the services of lawyers may also be considered to be warranted.
- Unless otherwise stated in this report, the assessments made assume that the sites and facilities that have been considered in this report will continue to be used for their current planned purpose without significant change.
- All work carried out in preparing this report has utilised and is based upon UEEC Ltd's current professional knowledge and understanding of current relevant UK standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in this legislation and guidance may occur at any time in the future and may cause any conclusions to become inappropriate or incorrect. UEEC Ltd does not accept responsibility for advising the Client or other interested parties of the facts or implications of any such changes;
- Where this report presents or relies upon the findings of ecological field surveys (including habitat, botanical or protected/notable species surveys), its conclusions should not be relied upon for longer than a maximum period of two years from the date of the original field surveys. Ecological change (e.g. colonisation of a site by a protected species) can occur rapidly and this limitation is not intended to imply that a likely absence of, for instance, a protected species will persist for any period of time;
- This report has been prepared using factual information contained in maps and documents prepared by others. No responsibility can be accepted by UEEC Ltd for the accuracy of such information;
- Every effort has been made to accurately represent the location of mapped features, however, the precise locations of features should not be relied upon;
- Populations of animals and plants are often transient in nature and a single survey visit can only provide a general indication of species present on site. Time of year when the survey was carried out, weather conditions and other variables will influence the results of an ecological survey (e.g. it is possible that some flowering plant species which flower at other times of the year were not observed). Every effort has been made to accurately note indicators of presence of protected, rare and notable species within and adjacent to the site but the possibility nonetheless exists for other species to be present which were not recorded or otherwise indicated by the survey;
- Any works undertaken as a consequence of the recommendations provided within this report should be subjected to the necessary health & safety checks and full risk assessments.

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