

Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Reddam House

December 2024

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

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Report Produced for Reddam House (Berkshire) Ltd

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EXCECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an assessment of the biodiversity change at Reddam House, Berkshire.
- 1.2 The baseline habitats include areas of modified grassland, with developed land; sealed surface in the form of roads, buildings and car parks, with scattered trees. This amounts to an on-site baseline value of 5.06 area habitat units. The site does not support any hedgerow or watercourse units.
- 1.3 The site is proposed for demolition of existing outhouses and erection of a two-storey boarding house, associated plant equipment, new landscaping and highways works and other associated works. The post intervention habitats will deliver 2.59 area habitat units.
- 1.4 Based on the DEFRA Statutory Metric, the habitat trading standards have not been met within this project and the proposals result in a percentage loss of 48.87% for Area Base habitats.
- 1.5 To ensure the project is in accordance with local and national policy, and emerging national legislation of +10%, 2.98 area habitat units will need to be offset. Of these, 0.47 units need to relate to a low distinctiveness habitat or higher, and 2.01 units need to relate to medium distinctiveness individual trees, to ensure the trading standards for the project are met.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an assessment of the biodiversity change following the proposals for the site at Reddam House, Berkshire, hereafter referred to as the 'site' and shown in Figure 1. It is located within Wokingham Borough Council's Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- 1.2 This report is submitted alongside the Statutory BNG Metric and detailed plans of the baseline and proposed habitats. This is used to inform the planning process in terms of the BNG objective for this project.
- 1.3 The key aims of the report are to:
 - Establish the total number of baseline Area Habitat Units (AHU) at the site. There are no Linear Biodiversity Units (LBU) or River Biodiversity Units (RBU) present on site.
 - Establish the total number of AHU which will be retained, enhanced, and created under the current design of the proposed development's landscape plan.
 - Determine whether the proposed development will result in a quantitative net loss, no net loss or a net gain for biodiversity on site.
 - Determine whether the proposed development achieves a scheme-wide net gain for biodiversity by evidencing compliance with the good practice principles.



Figure 1 Site location

2 SCOPE OF REPORT

2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment

2.1.1 This BNG assessment uses the following industry recognised best practice methods:

- CIEEM, IEMA & CIRIA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development
- DEFRA (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric
- CIEEM (2021) Biodiversity Net Gain Report & Audit Templates

2.1.2 The quantitative outcomes of the calculations are one component of the BNG assessment and associated good practice principles. A BNG assessment also requires the collation of qualitative evidence on the application of the mitigation hierarchy, stakeholder engagement and post-development habitat management. Collectively, these quantitative outcomes and qualitative evidence are used to inform the outcomes of the project wide BNG assessment.

2.2 Legislation

2.2.1 The relevant primary legislation for the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain is principally set out under Section 90A and Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This legislation was inserted into the Act by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 and includes amendments made by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Consequential Amendments) Regulations (2024). The relevant biodiversity net gain regulations most directly relevant to planning are:

- The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (2024) which commence biodiversity net gain for most types of new planning applications and provides transitional arrangements for section 73 permissions.
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations (2024) which prescribe exemptions for categories of development to which biodiversity net gain does not apply.
- The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations (2024) which amend the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and the Town and Country Planning (Section 62A Applications) (Procedure and Consequential Amendments) Order 2013 to include provisions related to planning applications and the Biodiversity Gain Plan, as well as modifications for phased development.
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024) which set out the modifications for irreplaceable habitat.

2.3 BNG Hierarchy

2.3.1 The biodiversity gain hierarchy for the purpose of the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain is set out in Article 30A of the Development Management Procedure Order. This hierarchy is separate to the general mitigation hierarchy set out within the NPFF.

- Avoiding adverse effects of the development on onsite habitat with a habitat distinctiveness score, applied in the biodiversity metric, equal to or higher than six.
- So far as those adverse effects cannot be avoided, mitigating those effects.
- So far as those adverse effects cannot be mitigated, habitat enhancement of onsite habitat.
- So far as there cannot be that enhancement, creation of onsite habitat.
- So far as there cannot be that creation, the availability of registered offsite biodiversity gain.
- So far as that offsite habitat enhancement cannot be secured, purchasing biodiversity credits.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desktop Survey

- 3.1.1 A search for priority habitats was undertaken using the Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory.
- 3.1.2 A search using publicly available information has been used to identify any irreplaceable habitats which are within or in proximity to the site. This included a search for Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Ancient Trees using the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) online layer.
- 3.1.3 The desktop survey included a search for local plans, wildlife strategies, or local policy which may inform strategic significance of the habitats within this assessment. If habitats are identified within a plan and are in the correct spatial location, they are entered as being of high significance. Habitats which are identified within a plan but fall outside spatial location or which are well suited to the area are assigned as being of moderate strategic significance. Other habitats are entered as being of low strategic significance. For the proposed development, no strategies were identified which relate to the strategic significance of the habitats on site.

3.2 UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.2.1 A UKHab survey was undertaken on 4th December 2024. The survey incorporated detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora.
- 3.2.2 Full results of the UKHab including species lists are provided within the corresponding Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

3.3 Condition Assessments

- 3.3.1 Condition assessments were undertaken for each habitat which require condition assessment sheets. Following the methodology and criteria provided within The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessments Sheets and Methodology (2023).

3.4 Grassland Survey Methodology

- 3.4.1 Grasslands were surveyed using a systematic approach, using 1x1m² quadrats samples. Four quadrats were undertaken for the onsite modified grassland. Information collected within each quadrat included aspect, slope, average ground cover, sward variation, species, and their percentage cover.

- 3.4.2 Where the grassland differed to a certain extent or was spatially separated it was considered that the grassland was a different habitat parcel, and another assessment was undertaken.
- 3.4.3 This survey methodology provides information required to classify the grassland to the correct grassland habitat type and provides sufficient information to undertake a BNG condition assessment.

3.5 Limitations and Assumptions

- 3.5.1 Habitat areas (ha) produced in GIS were rounded to two decimal places for inputting into the metric. Whilst this may lead to slight variation within the calculation, this is not considered a limitation to this BNG assessment because all habitats are considered to be captured accurately in GIS for representation in the BNG assessment.

4 DESKTOP SURVEY

4.1 Strategic Areas and Priority/Irreplaceable Habitats

- 4.1.1 This site is not located within any strategic area and as such, all of the habitats within this assessment have been input as being of a low strategic significance.
- 4.1.2 No priority habitats were identified on the site itself, with several parcels of Priority deciduous woodland within 1km. There is also a parcel of good quality semi-improved grassland, four areas of traditional orchard and one area of reedbed habitat within 1km of the site, as shown in Figure 2. It is considered that the site proposals will not result in any impacts on priority habitats.
- 4.1.3 A desktop search using publicly available information did not identify any irreplaceable habitats onsite. This was confirmed during the UKHab survey.

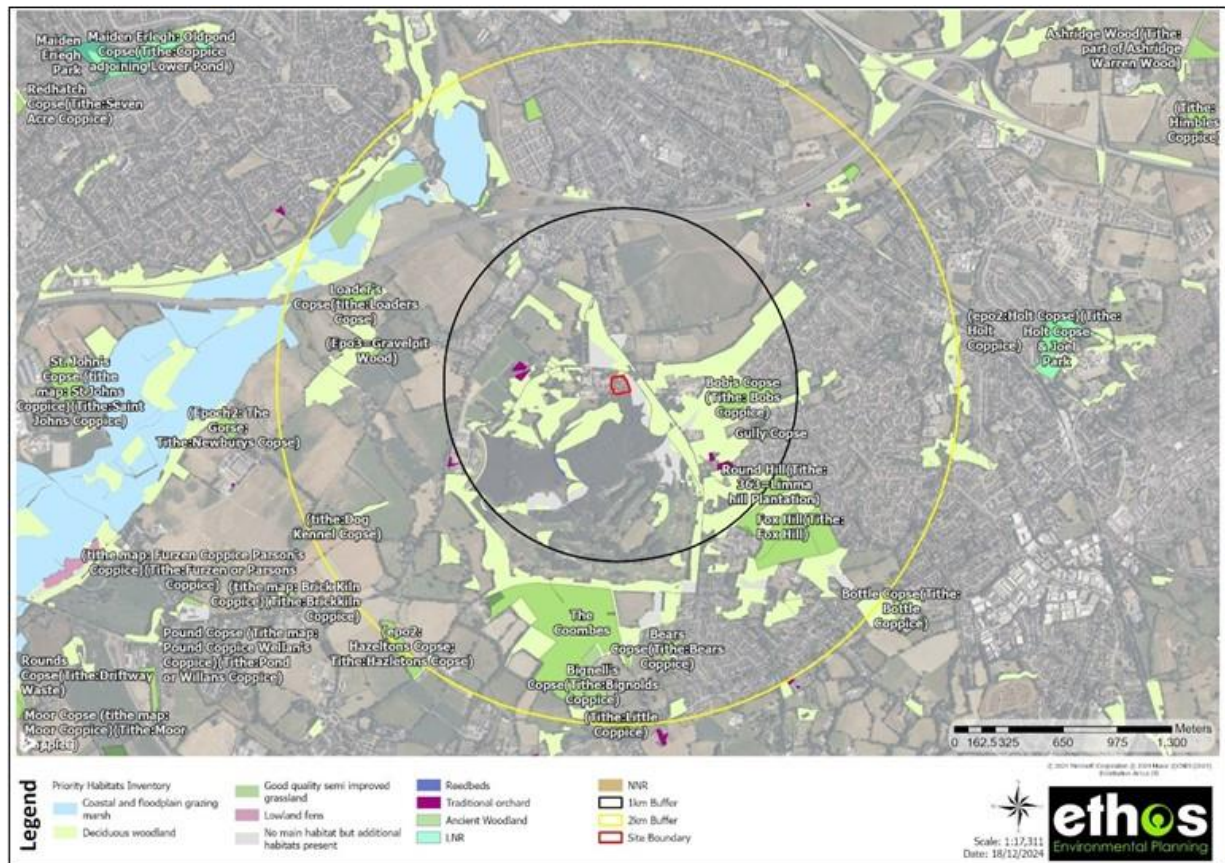


Figure 2 Designated sites and priority habitats within 1-2km

5 BASELINE HABITATS

5.1.1 The site encompasses 0.95 hectares. The baseline map displays the existing habitats onsite (Figure 3) and the habitats are listed below. Conditions sheets for the baseline habitats are provided within Appendix 2 of this report.

- Grassland – Modified grassland
- Urban – Developed land; sealed surface
- Individual trees – Urban trees



Figure 3 Baseline habitats

5.2 Area Biodiversity Units

Modified grassland

5.2.1 The site supports 0.55ha of modified grassland (Photos 1 and 2). At the time of survey, the grassland was managed to a homogenous, short sward and had a low species diversity. In addition, there were significant areas of damage and bare ground due to recreational impacts. This grassland is a low distinctiveness habitat in poor condition.



Photo 1 Grassland on site



Photo 2 Grassland on site

Developed land; sealed surface

- 5.2.2 Areas of sealed surface are present across the site including roads, car parks and buildings. This is a very low distinctive habitat and does not require a condition assessment.



Photo 3 Sealed surface road



Photo 4 Sealed surface road

Urban trees

- 5.2.3 There are several mature individual trees present across the site. These trees are assessed to be in a good condition due to the lack of observed damage and the presence of ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates.



Photo 5 Scattered trees



Photo 6 Scattered trees

6 PROPOSALS

- 6.1.1 The site is proposed for demolition of existing outhouses and erection of a two-storey boarding house, associated plant equipment, new landscaping and highways works and other associated works.



Figure 4 Landscape areas plan (0363-BDL-XX-XX-DR-L-0002-P07)

7 POST INTERVENTION HABITATS

- 7.1.1 Condition assessment sheets for created habitats are provided within Appendix 3 of this report. The proposed condition assessments include justification for how the habitats will meet their target conditions.



Figure 5 Proposed habitats

7.2 Lost Area Biodiversity Units

- 7.2.1 The proposed development will result in the loss of 0.31ha (0.62 units) of modified grassland, 0.04ha (0 units) of developed land; sealed surface and 0.18ha (2.16 units) of urban trees.

7.3 Retained Area Biodiversity Units

- 7.3.1 The proposed layout will retain 0.24 (0.48 units) of modified grassland, 0.35ha (0 units) of developed land; sealed surface and 0.15ha (1.8 units) of urban trees.

7.4 Created Area Biodiversity Units

Modified grassland

- 7.4.1 0.03ha of modified grassland will be created. This is a low distinctiveness habitat and will be in a poor condition. This habitat will deliver 0.06 units.

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

- 7.4.2 0.01ha of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface will be created. This is a very low distinctiveness habitat which does not require a condition assessment. This habitat will not deliver any habitat units.

Developed land; sealed surface

- 7.4.3 0.26ha of developed land; sealed surface will be created. This is a very low distinctiveness habitat which does not require a condition assessment. This habitat will not deliver any habitat units.

Introduced shrub

- 7.4.4 0.05ha of introduced shrub will be created. This is a low distinctiveness habitat which does not require a condition assessment. This habitat will deliver 0.1 units.

Urban trees

- 7.4.5 The equivalent of 0.05ha of urban trees will be planted. This is a medium distinctiveness habitat and will be in a moderate condition. This habitat will deliver 0.15 units.

8 SUMMARY OF ONSITE BIODIVERSITY CHANGE

- 8.1 The habitat trading standards have not been met within this project and the proposals result in a percentage loss of 48.87% for Area Base habitats, as shown in Figure 6 and 7 below.
- 8.2 In order to meet the trading standards relating to the loss of low distinctiveness grassland and medium distinctiveness trees, and to achieve a 10% net gain in line with the requirements of the Environmental Act 2021, 2.98 habitat units will need to be offset, of which 0.47 units need to relate to a low distinctiveness habitat or higher, and 2.01 units need to relate to medium distinctiveness individual trees.

On-site baseline	Habitat units	5.06	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	2.59	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	-2.47	-48.87%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Figure 6 BNG headline results

FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-2.47	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-48.87%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲		

Figure 7 BNG final results

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The site is proposed for demolition of existing outhouses and erection of a two-storey boarding house, associated plant equipment, new landscaping and highways works and other associated works.
- 9.2 The habitat trading standards have not been met within this project and the proposals result in a percentage loss of 48.87% for Area Base habitats. To ensure the project is in accordance with local and national policy, and emerging national legislation, 2.98 area habitat units will need to be offset. Of these, 0.47 units need to relate to a low distinctiveness habitat or higher, and 2.01 units need to relate to medium distinctiveness individual trees, to ensure the trading standards for the project are met.

10 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2021) Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Winchester, UK.

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APPENDIX 1 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

10.1 Statutory Framework

- 10.1.1 Biodiversity net gain is a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity.
- 10.1.2 In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This is referred to as biodiversity net gain in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains.
- 10.1.3 Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to a general biodiversity gain condition to secure the biodiversity gain objective. This objective is to deliver at least a 10% increase in relation to the pre-development biodiversity value of the development granted permission. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.
- 10.1.4 The general biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition: once planning permission has been granted, a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development. There are exemptions and transitional arrangements which disapply the condition from certain planning permissions, as well as special modifications for planning permissions for phased development and the treatment of irreplaceable habitats.
- 10.1.5 The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain also includes provisions about information requirements for planning applications and the treatment of the condition on planning decision notices.

10.2 Environment Act 2021

- 10.2.1 The Act requires a minimum of 10% net gain for biodiversity as a condition of planning permission.
- 10.2.2 Net gain is to be measured by the biodiversity metric published by the Secretary of State. The Act requires that gains must be secured for a minimum of 30 years post completion of development. Also, under Section 40 the NERC Act 2006, as amended by the Environment Act 2021, “A public authority which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time-to-time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.”...the biodiversity objective is, “...the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England through the exercise of functions in relation to England”. This is referred to as the Biodiversity Duty.
- 10.2.3 The Environment Act received Royal Assent in November 2021, meaning that by February 2024 the expectation for all planning permissions to include a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% will become a legal requirement.

10.3 BNG Exemptions

Small sites (exempt until April 2024)

- residential development where the number of dwellings is between 1 and 9, or if this is unknown, the site area is less than 0.5 hectares
- commercial development where floor space created is less than 1,000 square metres or total site area is less than 1 hectare
- development that is not the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits
- development that is not waste development

Developments below Threshold

- 10.3.1 A development that's below the threshold means that it does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:
- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of habitat
 - 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows

Householder Applications

- 10.3.2 These are applications made by householders as defined within article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. It includes, for example, small projects like home extensions, conservatories or loft conversions

Self-build and Custom Applications

10.3.3 An exemption applies to this type of development when all the following conditions apply:

- it consists of no more than 9 dwellings
- it's on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares
- it consists exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

Biodiversity Gain Site

10.3.4 Developments undertaken for the purpose of fulfilling the BNG planning condition for another development are exempt.

High Speed Railway Network

10.3.5 An exemption applies to any development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high-speed railway transport network, comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in section 1(2) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.

10.4 National Planning Policy Framework

10.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policy for England. Paragraphs of particular relevance from the NPPF are listed below:

10.4.2 Paragraph 180 states "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures".

10.4.3 Paragraph 185 states "To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."

10.4.4 Paragraph 186 states "When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while 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 or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate."

10.5 UK Governments 25 Year Environment Plan

- 10.5.1 The UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (DEFRA, 2018) states a desire to 'embed a 'net environmental gain' principle for development to deliver environmental improvements locally and nationally' and plans to consult on making Biodiversity Net Gain a mandatory requirement.
- 10.5.2 On 14th March 2019, Her Majesty's Treasury confirmed that following consultation, the government will use the forthcoming Environment Bill to mandate BNG for development in England, ensuring that the delivery of much-needed infrastructure and housing is not at the expense of vital biodiversity.

10.6 Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem

- 10.6.1 A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (DEFRA, 2011) is the national strategy for biodiversity. This sets out an ambition to halt the loss of biodiversity and see an increase in the area of priority habitats by 200,000 ha by 2020. Biodiversity 2020 sets in policy the objectives to improve our wildlife Sites, make them bigger, develop more of them and join them up (summarised as 'Bigger, Better, More and Joined').

10.7 NERC Act

- 10.7.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Countryside (NERC) Act (HMSO, 2006) requires public bodies, including local authorities, 'to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions'. Section 40 sets out that:
- Paragraph 1. "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity";
 - Paragraph 3. "Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat".
 - Section 41 sets out that: Paragraph 1. "The Secretary of State must... publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat ... of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity" based on consultation with Natural England; and that Every planning authority must "a) take such steps... to further the conservation of the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section, or (b) promote the taking by others of such steps".

APPENDIX 2 CONDITION ASSESSMENT SHEETS

Table 1 Grassland - low distinctiveness

Condition Assessment Criteria	Evidence	Pass/Fail
There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs. 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 creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock broad-leaved dock, common nettle, creeping buttercup, greater plantain, white clover and cow parsley), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland, and then use the relevant condition sheet.	An average of 4 species were recorded per m², with an abundance of undesirable species	Fail
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.	Homogenous sward height	Fail
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.	Bramble scrub present, but less than 20% cover	Pass
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.	Damage exceeds 5% due to high levels of recreational footfall	Fail
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	Bare ground is approximately 40% due to damage from footfall	Fail
Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	No bracken observed on site	Pass
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	No invasive species observed on site	Pass
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Achieved
Passes <3 criteria or 4-6 criteria, excluding essential criterion A	Poor (1)	Yes

Condition Assessment Criteria	Evidence	Pass/Fail
<i>Passes 4 or 5 criteria, including essential criterion A</i>	<i>Moderate (2)</i>	
<i>Passes 6 or 7 criteria, including essential criterion A</i>	<i>Good (3)</i>	

Table 2 Individual trees

Condition assessment Criteria	Evidence		Pass/Fail	
The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	80% of the block is native		Pass	
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).	Tree canopies are continuous		Pass	
The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	All of the trees are mature		Pass	
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.	No evidence of damage or adverse health was observed		Pass	
Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Features suitable for bats and invertebrates were identified		Pass	
More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	90% of the canopy was oversailing		Pass	
Condition Assessment Result (/6)	<2	3-4	5-6	6
Condition Assessment Score (1-3)	<i>Poor (1)</i>	<i>Moderate (2)</i>	<i>Good (3)</i>	Good

APPENDIX 3 PROPOSED HABITAT CONDITION JUSTIFICATION

Table 3 Grassland - low distinctiveness

Condition Assessment Criteria	Justification	Pass/Fail
There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs. 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 creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock broad-leaved dock, common nettle, creeping buttercup, greater plantain, white clover and cow parsley), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland, and then use the relevant condition sheet.	The newly created grassland will be planted to match the retained grassland on site. It is therefore expected to have poor species diversity	Fail
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.	The new grassland will be subject to the same management practices as the retained grassland and will therefore be maintained at a homogenous sward height	Fail
Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i> may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	The grassland will be subject to regular management which will prevent scrub establishing	Pass
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.	The usage of the site will remain the same and it is therefore expected that the new grassland will experience high levels of footfall resulting in associated damage	Fail
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	The usage of the site will remain the same and it is therefore expected that the new grassland will experience high levels of footfall resulting in associated bare ground	Fail

Condition Assessment Criteria	Justification	Pass/Fail
Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	The grassland will be subject to regular management which will prevent bracken establishing	Pass
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	The grassland will be regularly monitored to assess the coverage of these species and inform remedial actions	Pass
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Achieved
<i>Passes <3 criteria or 4-6 criteria, excluding essential criterion A</i>	Poor (1)	Yes
<i>Passes 4 or 5 criteria, including essential criterion A</i>	<i>Moderate (2)</i>	
<i>Passes 6 or 7 criteria, including essential criterion A</i>	<i>Good (3)</i>	

Table 4 Individual trees

Condition assessment Criteria		Evidence		Pass/Fail
The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).		New tree planting will comprise predominantly native species		Pass
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).		Trees will be managed to ensure they develop good structures with continuous canopies		Pass
The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).		The newly planted trees will comprise young whips which will not mature within 30 years		Fail
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.		The trees will be monitored for evidence of damage or adverse health. Any trees which die or become damaged within 30 years will be replaced like-for-like		Pass
Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.		Natural ecological niches take time to develop and it is considered unlikely that such features would be present within 30 years		Fail
More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.		Trees will be managed to ensure they develop good structures with oversailing canopies		Pass
Condition Assessment Result (/6)	<2	3-4	5-6	4
Condition Assessment Score (1-3)	Poor (1)	Moderate (2)	Good (3)	Moderate