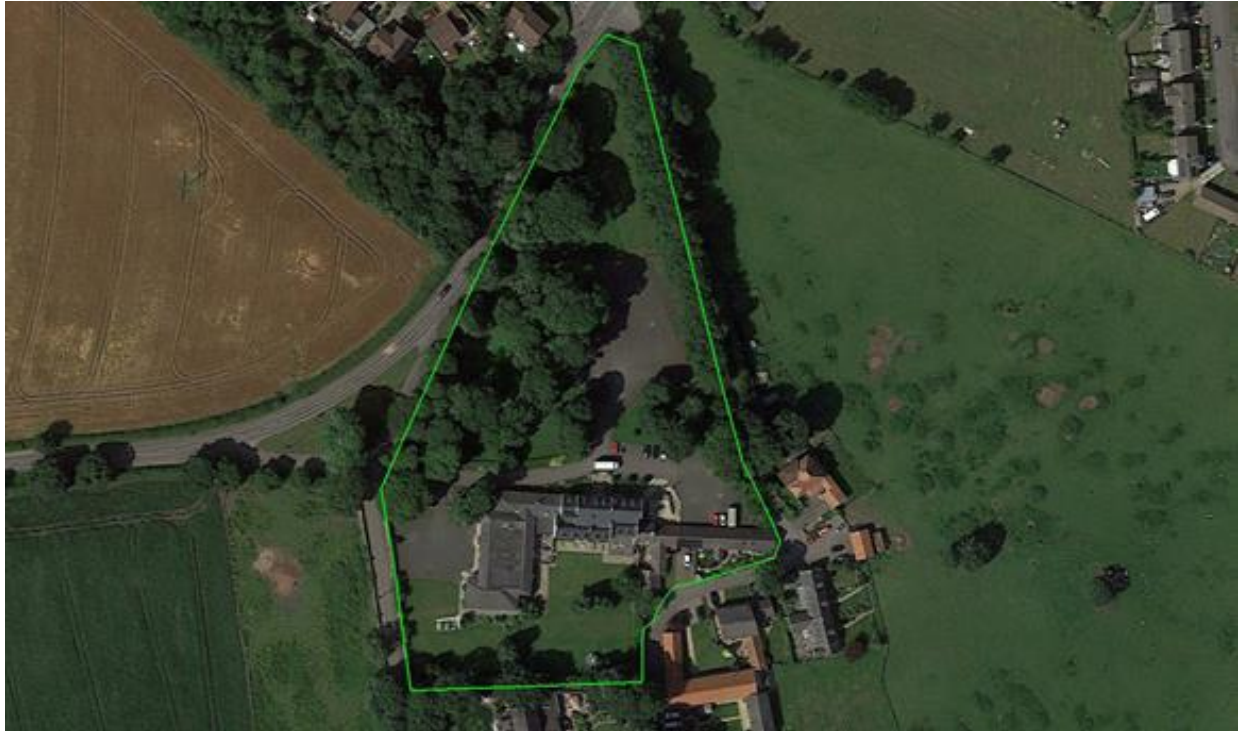
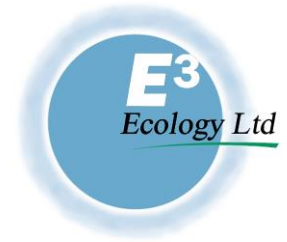


# BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT HALLGARTH MANOR HOTEL



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<b>CLIENT:</b>	GW Architectural
<b>PROJECT NUMBER:</b>	7259
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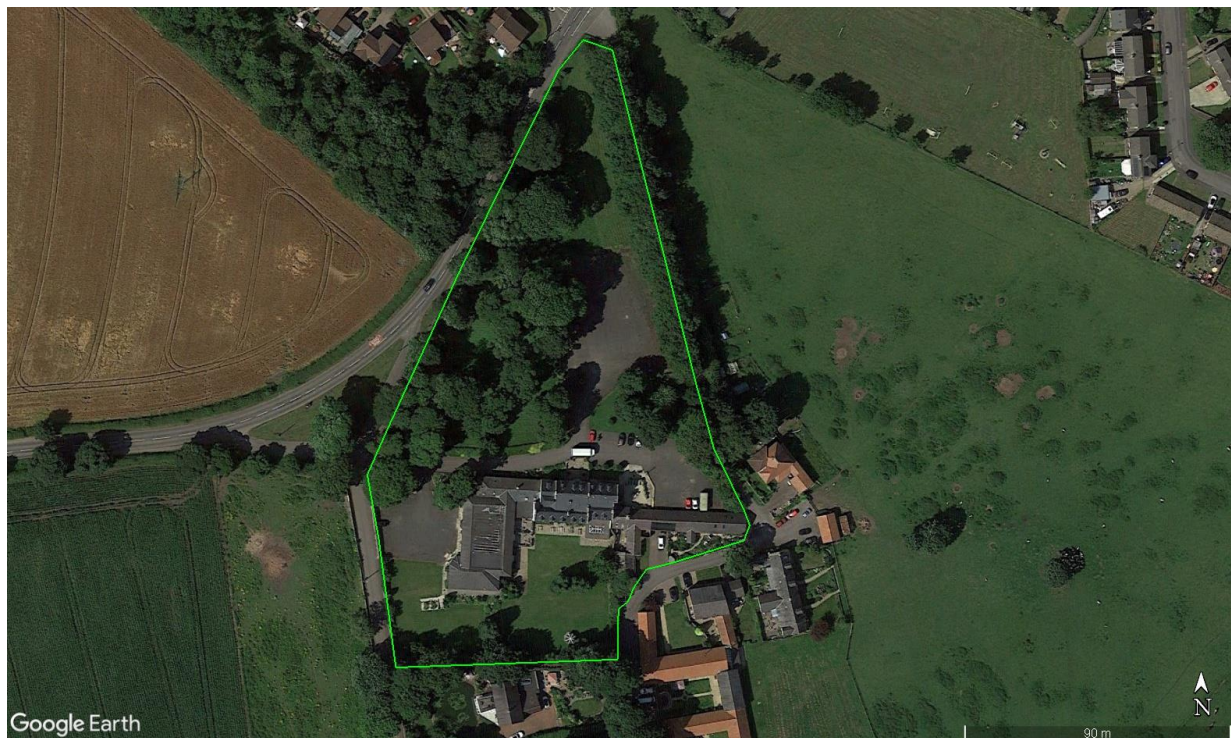
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## A. INTRODUCTION

Following on from ecological studies at Hallgarth Manor Hotel, E3 Ecology Ltd was commissioned to complete a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment using DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric 4.0 to calculate the anticipated net change in biodiversity value of the site as a result of the proposed development.

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of the site (see separate report) recorded the habitats on the proposed development site, which were used to inform this metric assessment.

The site is located in High Pittington, County Durham, at an approximate central grid reference of NZ 32815 43755. The site boundary and setting are illustrated in the figures below.



**FIGURE 1: SITE BOUNDARY**  
(Google Earth Pro)





**FIGURE 2: 500M SITE SETTING**  
(Google Earth Pro)

The proposed development is for construction of eight holiday lodges, conversion of an existing disused building to contain two bedrooms and an area of hardstanding. The development proposals are shown in the figure below:

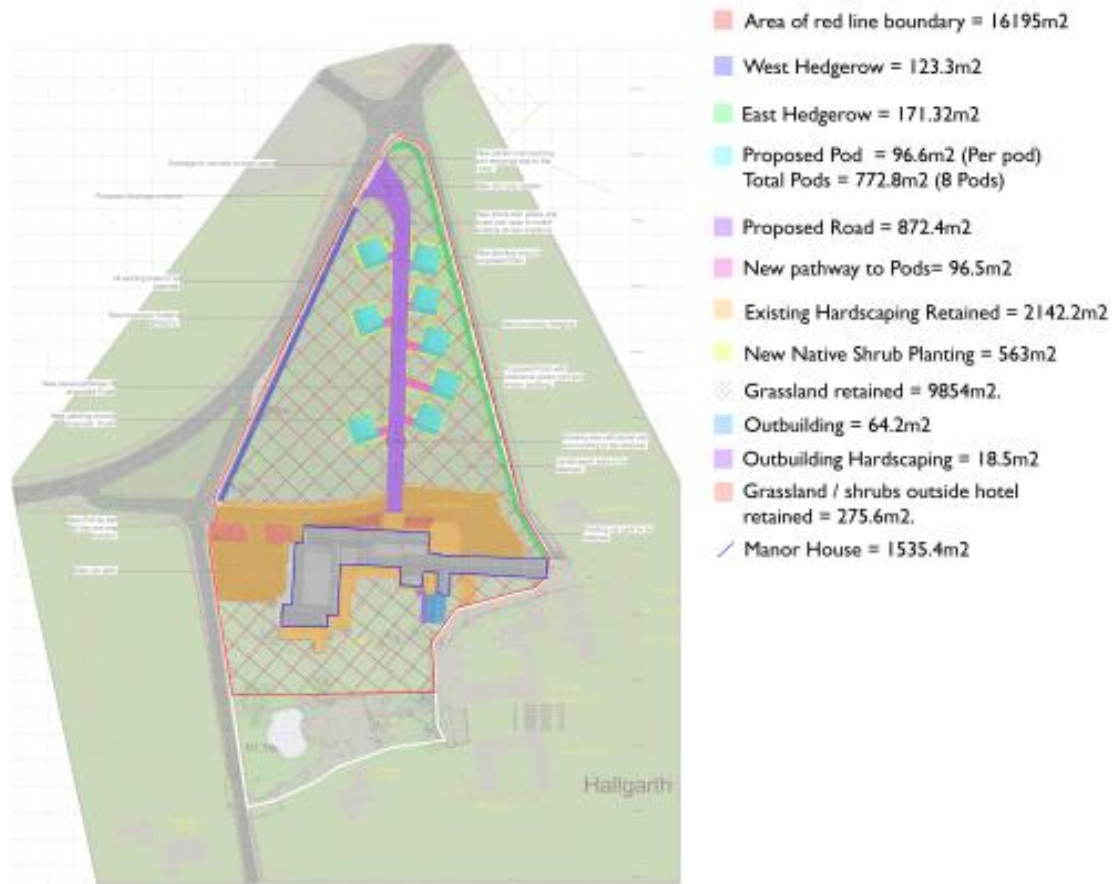


FIGURE 3: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

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## B. METHODOLOGY

### B.1 HABITAT CONDITION ASSESSMENTS & BIODIVERSITY METRIC

The Biodiversity Metric provides a way of measuring and accounting for biodiversity losses and gains resulting from development or land management change.

Firstly a desk study was completed using historic aerial imagery to assess whether habitats on site have significantly changed since January 2020, so that sites which may have been purposely degraded or “de-risked” ahead of a planning application submission are not rewarded for doing so, in accordance with DEFRA requirements.

Existing (baseline) and proposed (created or enhanced) habitat types, areas and other associated relevant information were used to inform the metric. The Phase 1 to Metric translation tool was used to translate habitats for use in the biodiversity metric (Appendix 2). All measurements are in hectares and kilometres and to at least two decimal places. QGIS was used to calculate pre-development areas and post development areas were provided by the landscape architects.

Condition assessment was undertaken for all habitats, following the guidance provided in the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Technical Supplement. This was also used to assess enhancement opportunities for the habitats that are to be retained.

To assign strategic significance, the Local Planning Authority website has been searched for local plans or other accessible resources that would define if any habitats on site are important for their potential biodiversity value or if they form wildlife corridors. DEFRA’s MAGIC website<sup>1</sup> has also been consulted for Natural England designated Network Enhancement Zones (1 or 2) and Fragmentation Action Zones. Where habitats within the site have been identified using these resources, they have been classified as “within an area formally identified in local strategy”. Where habitats have been classified as ecologically desirable, this has been assessed by E3 Ecology, based on professional judgement using the company’s knowledge of the site and adjacent land, for example if it supports key species, habitat types that are limited in the local area or priority habitats. Otherwise, habitats are assessed as “Area/compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy”.

The metric only assesses direct (temporary or permanent) habitat impacts. Where there are potential indirect or species-related impacts, these have been assessed in a separate Ecological Impact Assessment report with appropriate mitigation/compensation provided.

The metric design aims to encourage enhancement, not transformation, of the natural environment<sup>2</sup>. Where possible, habitat created to compensate for loss of a natural or semi-natural habitat aims to be of the same broad type (e.g. new woodland to replace lost woodland) unless there is a good ecological reason to do otherwise (e.g. to restore a heathland habitat that was converted to woodland for timber in the past).

Urban trees, where present on site, have been classified using the ‘urban tree helper’ within the metric. The biodiversity metric 4.0 user guide provides examples of urban tree sizes (table 7.2). The following reference has been used for size classification:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Natural England Joint Publication JP039 – Biodiversity Metric 3.1: User Guide (2022)

<b>TABLE 1: URBAN TREE SIZE REFERENCES</b>			
<b>Size class</b>	<b>Diameter at Breast Height (cm)</b>	<b>Metric RPA radius (m)</b>	<b>Metric area equivalent (ha)</b>
Small	≤ 30	3.6m	0.0041 ha
Medium	> 30 to ≥ 90	10.8m	0.0366 ha
Large	> 90	15.6m	0.0764 ha

Habitats have been assessed in accordance with the criteria listed in the relevant habitat condition assessment sheets where possible and, if necessary, using surveyors' professional judgement to supplement the condition assessments.

## **B.2 CONSTRAINTS**

The initial survey used to inform baseline habitat condition assessments was completed at a suboptimal time of year for botanical identification. However this has been taken into account when assessing the condition of habitats against the relevant criteria and a precautionary approach has been adopted.



## C. RESULTS

### C.1 EXISTING AND PROPOSED HABITATS

#### C.1.1 PRE-DEVELOPMENT

Historic aerial imagery shows that the site has not significantly changed since January 2020.

The EclA of the site (see separate report) recorded the following habitats on the proposed development site:



**FIGURE 4: HABITAT MAP**  
(Google Earth Pro)

The above habitats were categorised based on the methodology of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's Phase 1 Habitat Survey, as outlined in their habitat-mapping manual<sup>3</sup>. However, as the Biodiversity Metric is based on the UKHab classification system, the on-site recorded habitats have been translated into the habitats used in the metric.

The 1.69ha site provides 4.68 habitat units, and 0.55 hedgerow units. Baseline habitats are detailed below, with the achieved condition assessment criteria indicated in **bold text**.

- 0.3373ha of modified grassland in the north of site – assessed as good condition as it meets six of the seven criteria:
  - **There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m<sup>2</sup> present, including at least 2 forbs.**

<sup>3</sup> Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey, A Technique For Environmental Audit, JNCC, 2010

- 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.
- **Some scattered scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area.**
- **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.**
- **Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).**
- **Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.**
- **There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).**
- 0.2687ha of modified grassland in the south of site – assessed as poor condition as it meets five of the seven criteria but fails essential criterion A:
  - There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m<sup>2</sup> present, including at least 2 forbs.
  - 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.
  - **Some scattered scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area.**
  - **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.**
  - **Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).**
  - **Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.**
  - **There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).**
- 0.367ha of other woodland; broadleaved – assessed as poor condition (condition assessment criteria shown in Appendix 3) due to meeting conditions: A (moderate), B (good), C (poor), D (moderate), E (poor), F (good), G (poor), H (good), I (moderate), J (poor), K (moderate), L (poor), M (poor) giving a total score of 23.
- 0.002ha mixed scrub – this is the ivy that is covering a building, with no obvious other match through the UK Hab descriptions. Mixed scrub has therefore been selected as closest match – assessed as poor condition as it meets one of the five criteria:
  - There are at least three woody species, with no one species comprising more than 75% of the cover (except common juniper, sea buckthorn or box, which can be up to 100% cover).
  - There is a good age range – all of the following are present: seedlings, young shrubs and mature shrubs.
  - **There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981) and undesirable species make up less than 5% of ground cover.**
  - The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and/or herbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat(s).
  - There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.
- 0.0276ha of introduced shrub– condition N/A
- 0.015ha of vegetated garden– condition N/A
- 0.1599ha of buildings classed as developed land; sealed surface – condition N/A

- 0.442ha of hardstanding and paths classed as developed land; sealed surface – condition N/A
- 0.0692ha of rural trees comprising 17 small sized trees (calculated in addition to the total site area) – assessed as moderate condition as they meet four of the six criteria.
  - **More than 70% of trees are native species.**
  - **Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5m wide. Individual trees automatically pass this criterion.**
  - More than 50% of trees are mature or veteran.
  - **There is little or no evidence of adverse impact on tree health by anthropogenic activities such as vandalism or herbicide use. There is no current regular pruning regime so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.**
  - Micro-habitats for birds, mammals and insects are present e.g. presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.
  - **More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.**
- 0.138km of line of trees – assessed as moderate condition as it meets four of the five criteria:
  - **At least 70% of trees are native species.**
  - **Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.**
  - **One or more trees has veteran features and or natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates, such as presence of standing and attached deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.**
  - There is an undisturbed naturally-vegetated strip of at least 6 m on both sides to protect the line of trees from farming and other human activities (excluding grazing). Where veteran trees are present, root protection areas should follow standing advice.
  - **At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition (deadwood or veteran features valuable for wildlife are excluded from this). 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.**

The site lies within Pittington Civil Parish. Searches of the council's local plans and DEFRA's MAGIC map application determined that all baseline habitats were assessed as "Area/compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy".

#### C.1.2 POST DEVELOPMENT

The post development plans include construction of eight holiday lodges, conversion of an existing disused building to contain two bedrooms and an area of hardstanding

##### C.1.2.1 MEASURES TAKEN TO AVOID AND MINIMISE EFFECTS ON BIODIVERSITY

Existing trees have been retained and development has been concentrated in less ecologically valuable areas of the site where possible.

##### C.1.2.2 HABITAT RETENTION & ENHANCEMENT

0.3311ha of the other woodland broadleaved habitat on site will be retained and enhanced through understorey planting and removal of cherry laurel to increase overall condition score to 27 by meeting conditions (condition assessment criteria shown in Appendix 3): A (moderate), B (good), C (good), D (good), E (poor), F (good), G (poor), H (good), I (moderate), J (moderate), K (moderate), L (poor), M (poor).

0.1447ha of good condition modified grassland, 0.2668 of poor condition modified grassland, 0.0276ha introduce shrub, 0.015ha vegetated garden, 0.1599ha building and 0.2142 hardstanding will be retained throughout the development.

All rural trees (0.0692ha) are to be retained during the development.

All 0.138km of the line of tree is to be retained throughout development.

The remainder of the habitats on site (0.46ha) will be lost to the development.

### C.1.2.3 HABITAT CREATION

The following habitats will be created, with the targeted condition assessment criteria indicated in **bold text**.

Post-development habitats are based upon the landscape drawing 22007\_Site Layout Areas (Rev B) (see figure below), with area measurements provided by the project architect.



FIGURE 5: LANDSCAPING PROPOSALS

- 0.0773ha of other green roof – condition N/A.
- 0.0563ha of planting around pods classed as mixed scrub – assessed as poor condition based on the habitat meeting two of the five criteria:



- **There are at least three woody species, with no one species comprising more than 75% of the cover (except common juniper, sea buckthorn or box, which can be up to 100% cover).**
  - There is a good age range – all of the following are present: seedlings, young shrubs and mature shrubs.
  - **There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981) and undesirable species make up less than 5% of ground cover.**
  - The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and/or herbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat(s).
  - There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.
- 0.0988ha paths, hardstanding and roads classed as developed land; sealed surface – condition N/A.
  - 0.2278ha of modified grassland (amenity grassland lawn) – assessed as moderate condition based on the habitat meeting four of the seven criteria:
    - **There must be 6-8 species per m<sup>2</sup>.**
    - Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm)
    - **Scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area.**
    - **Physical damage evident in less than 5% of total grassland area.**
    - Cover of bare ground between 1% and 10%.
    - **Cover of bracken is less than 20%.**
    - **There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).**
  - 0.29km of native hedgerow – assessed as good condition (condition assessment criteria shown in Appendix 4) due to meeting conditions: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, D1
- All post-development habitats were assessed as “Area/compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy”.

## C.2 METRIC SUMMARY

The post-development site will provide 5.45 units for habitats, and 1.70 units for hedgerows. The table below provides the headline data from the Metric. The excel spreadsheet is provided in digital form for separate review by the Local Planning Authority.

Hallgarth Manor Hotel		Return to results menu	
<b>Headline Results</b>			
Scroll down for final results <a href="#">▲</a>			
On-site baseline	Habitat units	4.68	
	Hedgerow units	0.55	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention <small>(Including habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	5.45	
	Hedgerow units	1.70	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change <small>(units &amp; percentage)</small>	Habitat units	0.77	16.53%
	Hedgerow units	1.15	208.39%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
<b>FINAL RESULTS</b>			
Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	0.77	
	Hedgerow units	1.15	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	16.53%	
	Hedgerow units	208.39%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

Based on the above values, the metric indicates a predicted net gain of 0.77 habitat units, constituting a change of +16.53%.

The metric indicates a net gain of 1.15 hedgerow units (+208.39%). It should be noted that hedgerow units must be assessed separately to habitat units and both should achieve a 10% net gain; one cannot be used to offset a deficit in the other.

### C.3 BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, TIMINGS AND REPORTING PROPOSALS

Developing BNG guidance requires on-site gains (e.g. habitat creation and enhancements) to be delivered within 12 months of the start of construction. If this is not possible, they must be provided before occupation.

The full habitat creation, enhancement and ongoing management details will be provided separately in a detailed management plan (such as a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan or similar) which is recommended to be required through a pre-start planning condition. However, brief principles of the management requirements include:

- Scrub is to be cut on a rotational basis, with 20% cut every 5 years so that a range of young to old growth is always present but the scrub does not succeed into woodland.

“As built” plans will be provided by the developer on completion of construction, and an accompanying updated biodiversity metric submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to demonstrate net gain delivery post-construction.

Monitoring will be undertaken on completion (to inform the updating metric), and then in years 2, 5, 10, 20 and 30, with monitoring reports to include recommendations for remedial actions to ensure that the agreed habitats and habitat condition are achieved. These reports will be submitted to the LPA ecologist and those responsible for any off-site compensation delivery (if provided).

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## D. CONCLUSIONS

The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment demonstrates an anticipated net gain of 16.53% in the biodiversity value of the site.

The landscaping proposals referenced in this assessment (if approved) must be correctly implemented and their management should be secured via a suitable management plan, including provisions for monitoring of the success of habitat creation/enhancement measures, providing feedback to the LPA and identifying contingency measures to address any failures.

Based on this assessment it is anticipated that the proposals may contribute to local and national conservation targets and are compliant with the relevant planning policies within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Additional enhancements are proposed which are not considered within the metric, including:

- Creation of hedgehog/reptile/amphibian hibernacula or habitat piles.
- Installation of additional bird nest boxes and bat boxes in the trees on site. The exact number, types and locations are to be agreed with the council prior to installation.
- Provision of integrated bird nesting and bat roosting features in the new buildings on site. The exact number, types and locations are to be agreed with the council prior to installation.

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**APPENDIX 2 – METRIC / PHASE 1 TRANSLATION**

Phase 1 Habitat	Metric habitat	Distinctiveness band
Woodland	Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed	Medium
Broadleaved woodland	Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved	Medium
Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Woodland and forest - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	High
Plantation broadleaved woodland	Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved	Medium
Coniferous woodland	Woodland and forest - Other coniferous woodland	Low
Semi-natural coniferous woodland	Woodland and forest - Native pine woodlands	High
Plantation coniferous woodland	Woodland and forest - Other coniferous woodland	Low
Mixed woodland	Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed	Medium
Semi-natural mixed woodland	Woodland and forest - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	High
Plantation mixed woodland	Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed	Medium
Scrub	Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub	Medium
Dense / continuous scrub	Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub	Medium
Scattered scrub	Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub	Medium
Parkland / scattered trees	Woodland and forest - Wood-pasture and parkland	High
Broadleaved parkland / scattered trees	Woodland and forest - Wood-pasture and parkland	High
Coniferous parkland / scattered trees	Woodland and forest - Other coniferous woodland	Medium
Mixed parkland / scattered trees	Woodland and forest - Wood-pasture and parkland	High
Recently-felled woodland	Woodland and forest - Felled	High
Broadleaved recently felled woodland	Woodland and forest - Felled	High
Coniferous recently felled woodland	Woodland and forest - Felled	High
Mixed recently felled woodland	Woodland and forest - Felled	High
Acid grassland	Grassland - Other lowland acid grassland	Medium
Acid grassland	Grassland - Upland acid grassland	Medium
Unimproved acid grassland	Grassland - Lowland dry acid grassland	V.High
Unimproved acid grassland	Grassland - Upland hay meadows	V.High
Semi-improved acid grassland (Good quality)	Grassland - Upland acid grassland	Medium
Semi-improved acid grassland (Good quality)	Grassland - Other lowland acid grassland	Medium
Semi-improved acid grassland (Poor quality)	Grassland - Modified grassland	Low
Neutral grassland	Grassland - Other neutral grassland	Medium
Unimproved neutral grassland	Grassland - Lowland meadows	V.High
Semi-improved neutral grassland (Good quality)	Grassland - Other neutral grassland	Medium
Semi-improved neutral grassland (Poor quality)	Grassland - Modified grassland	Low
Calcareous grassland	Grassland - Upland calcareous grassland	High

Calcareous grassland	Grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland	High
Unimproved calcareous grassland	Grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland	High
Unimproved calcareous grassland	Grassland - Upland calcareous grassland	High
Semi-improved calcareous grassland (Good quality)	Grassland - Upland calcareous grassland	High
Semi-improved calcareous grassland (Good quality)	Grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland	High
Semi-improved calcareous grassland (Poor quality)	Grassland - Modified grassland	Low
Improved grassland	Grassland - Modified grassland	Low
Marsh/marshy grassland	Wetland - Purple moor grass and rush pastures	V.High
Marsh/marshy grassland	Grassland - Other neutral grassland	Medium
Marsh/marshy grassland	Grassland - Modified grassland	Low
Poor semi-improved grassland	Grassland - Modified grassland	Low
Strandline vegetation coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal vegetated shingle	High
Sand dune	Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal sand dunes	High
Dune slack sand dune coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal sand dunes	High
Dune grassland sand dune coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal sand dunes	High
Dune heath sand dune coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal sand dunes	High
Dune scrub sand dune coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal sand dunes	High
Open dune sand dune coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal sand dunes	High
Maritime cliff coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Maritime cliff and slopes	High
Hard maritime cliff coastland	Sparsely vegetated land - Maritime cliff and slopes	High
Soft maritime cliff	Sparsely vegetated land - Maritime cliff and slopes	High
Crevice/ledge vegetation	Sparsely vegetated land - Maritime cliff and slopes	High
Crevice/ledge vegetation	Grassland - Tall herb communities	High
Coastal grassland	Sparsely vegetated land - Maritime cliff and slopes	High
Coastal grassland	Grassland - Lowland meadows	V.High
Coastal grassland	Grassland - Lowland dry acid grassland	V.High
Coastal grassland	Grassland - Other lowland acid grassland	Medium
Coastal heathland	Sparsely vegetated land - Maritime cliff and slopes	High
Coastal heathland	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Standing open water	lakes - Aquifer fed naturally fluctuating water bodies	V.High
Standing open water	Lakes - Ditches	Medium
Standing open water	Lakes - High alkalinity lakes	High
Standing open water	Lakes - Low alkalinity lakes	High
Standing open water	Lakes - Marl Lakes	High
Standing open water	Lakes - Moderate alkalinity lakes	High
Standing open water	Lakes - Peat Lakes	High
Standing open water	Lakes - Ponds (Priority Habitat)	High

Standing open water	Lakes - Ponds (Non- Priority Habitat)	Medium
Standing open water	Lakes - Reservoirs	Medium
Standing open water	Lakes - Temporary lakes, ponds and pools	High
Dry dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Dry dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Upland Heathland	High
Acidic dry dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Acidic dry dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Upland Heathland	High
Basic dry dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Basic dry dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Upland Heathland	High
Wet dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Wet dwarf shrub heath	Heathland and shrub - Upland Heathland	High
Lichen / bryophyte heath	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Lichen / bryophyte heath	Heathland and shrub - Upland Heathland	High
Montane heath / dwarf herb	Heathland and shrub - Mountain heaths and willow scrub	V.High
Dry heath / acidic grass mosaic	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Wet heath / acidic grass mosaic	Heathland and shrub - Lowland Heathland	High
Dry heath / acidic grass mosaic	Heathland and shrub - Upland Heathland	High
Wet heath / acidic grass mosaic	Heathland and shrub - Upland Heathland	High
Bracken	Grassland - Bracken	Low
Continuous bracken	Grassland - Bracken	Low
Scattered bracken	Grassland - Bracken	Low
Other tall herb or fern (Good quality)	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Other tall herb or fern	Grassland - Bracken	Medium
Tall ruderal	Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/Ephemeral	Low
Non-ruderal	Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/Ephemeral	Low
Bog	Wetland - Lowland raised bog	V.High
Sphagnum bog	Wetland - Lowland raised bog	V.High
Blanket bog	Wetland - Blanket bog	V.High
Raised bog	Wetland - Lowland raised bog	V.High
Wet modified bog	Wetland - Transition mires and quaking bogs (H7140)	V.High
Dry modified bog	Wetland - Blanket bog	V.High
Dry modified bog	Wetland - Lowland raised bog	V.High
Flush and spring	Wetland - Fens (upland and lowland)	V.High
Acid/neutral flush	Wetland - Fens (upland and lowland)	V.High
Basic flush	Wetland - Fens (upland and lowland)	V.High
Bryophyte-dominated spring	Wetland - Fens (upland and lowland)	V.High
Fen	Wetland - Fens (upland and lowland)	V.High
Valley mire	Wetland – Oceanic Valley Mire[1] (D2.1)	V.High
Basin mire	Wetland – Oceanic Valley Mire[1] (D2.1)	V.High
Floodplain mire	Wetland – Oceanic Valley Mire[1] (D2.1)	V.High
Bare peat	Wetland - Depressions on Peat substrates (H7150)	V.High
Swamp	Wetland - Fens (upland and lowland)	V.High

Marginal and inundation	Wetland - Fens (upland and lowland)	V.High
Marginal and inundation	Wetland - Reedbeds	High
Marginal vegetation	Use the Feature that it is within, i.e. River, Lake type etc.	
Inundation vegetation	Wetland - Reedbeds	High
Natural rock exposures and caves (Good quality)	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Natural rock exposures and caves	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Inland cliff (High quality)	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Inland cliff	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Acidic inland cliff	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Basic inland cliff	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Scree	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Acidic scree	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Basic scree	Sparsely vegetated land - Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	High
Limestone pavement	Sparsely vegetated land - Limestone pavement	V.High
Other natural rock exposure	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Other acidic natural rock exposure	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Other basic rock exposure	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Artificial rock exposures	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Artificial rock exposures	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Artificial rock exposures	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Artificial rock exposures	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Artificial rock exposures	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Artificial rock exposures	Sparsely vegetated land - Other inland rock and scree	Medium
Quarry	Urban - Active sand pit quarry or open cast mine	Low
Spoil heap	Urban - Active sand pit quarry or open cast mine	Low
Mine	Urban - Active sand pit quarry or open cast mine	Low
Refuse tip	Urban - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	V.Low
Cultivated/disturbed ground	Cropland - Cereal crops	Low
Arable	Cropland - Cereal crops	Low
Amenity grassland	Grassland - Modified grassland	Low
Ephemeral / short perennial	Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/Ephemeral	Low
Introduced shrub	Urban - Introduced shrub	Low



Fence	Urban - Built linear features	V.Low
Wall	Urban - Built linear features	V.Low
Built-up areas	Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	V.Low
Caravans	Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	V.Low
Sea wall (artificial materials)	Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	V.Low
Buildings	Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	V.Low
Bare ground	Urban - Vacant/derelict land/ bareground	Low

## APPENDIX 3 – WOODLAND CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Condition Sheet: WOODLAND Habitat Type					
UKHab Habitat Type(s)					
Woodland and forest - Lowland beech and yew woodland Woodland and forest - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland Woodland and forest - Native pine woodlands Woodland and forest - Other coniferous woodland Woodland and forest - Other Scot's pine woodland Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed Woodland and forest - Upland birchwoods Woodland and forest - Upland mixed ashwoods Woodland and forest - Upland oakwood Woodland and forest - Wet woodland					
Habitat Description					
<a href="#">See UKHab</a>  This condition sheet is based on the England Woodland Biodiversity Group (EWBG) Woodland Condition Survey Method, available here: <a href="https://woodlandwildlifetoolkit.sylva.org.uk/assess">https://woodlandwildlifetoolkit.sylva.org.uk/assess</a>					
Condition Assessment Criteria					
	Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes <sup>1</sup> present.	Two age-classes <sup>1</sup> present.	One age-class <sup>1</sup> present.	
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland <sup>2</sup> .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland <sup>2</sup> .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland <sup>2</sup> .	
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species <sup>3</sup> present in woodland.	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, other invasive species <sup>3</sup> <10% cover.	<i>Rhododendron</i> or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species <sup>3</sup> >10% cover.	
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species <sup>4</sup> found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species <sup>4</sup> found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species <sup>4</sup> across woodland parcel.	
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native <sup>5</sup> .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native <sup>5</sup> .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native <sup>5</sup> .	

<b>F</b>	<b>Open space within woodland</b>	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space <sup>6</sup> . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted <sup>7</sup> .	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space <sup>6</sup> .	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space <sup>6</sup> . But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category <sup>7</sup> .	
<b>G</b>	<b>Woodland regeneration</b>	All three classes present in woodland <sup>8</sup> ; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland <sup>8</sup> .	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland <sup>8</sup> .	
<b>H</b>	<b>Tree health</b>	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback <sup>9</sup> .	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present <sup>9</sup> .	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present <sup>9</sup> .	
<b>I</b>	<b>Vegetation and ground flora</b>	Recognisable NVC plant community <sup>10</sup> at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community <sup>10</sup> at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community <sup>10</sup> at ground layer present.	
<b>J</b>	<b>Woodland vertical structure</b>	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland <sup>11</sup> .	Two storeys across all survey plots <sup>11</sup> .	One or less storey across all survey plots <sup>11</sup> .	
<b>K</b>	<b>Veteran trees</b>	Two or more veteran trees <sup>12</sup> per hectare.	One veteran tree <sup>12</sup> per hectare.	No veteran trees <sup>12</sup> present in woodland.	
<b>L</b>	<b>Amount of deadwood</b>	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 <sup>13</sup> .	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 <sup>13</sup> .	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 <sup>13</sup> .	
<b>M</b>	<b>Woodland disturbance</b>	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident <sup>14</sup> .	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground <sup>14</sup> .	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground <sup>14</sup> .	
<b>Total score (out of a possible 39)</b>					

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
Total score >32 (33 to 39)	Good (3)
Total score 26 to 32	Moderate (2)
Total score <26 (13 to 25)	Poor (1)
Notes	
<p><b>Footnote 1</b> - See EWBG method INDICATOR 1 for more information. If tree species is not a birch, cherry or Sorbus: 0 – 20 years (Young); 21 - 150 years (Intermediate); and &gt;150 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.</p> <p><b>Footnote 2</b> - See EWBG method INDICATOR 2 for more information. Browsing pressure is considered to be significant where &gt;20% of vegetation visible within each survey plot shows damage from any type of browsing pressure listed.</p> <p><b>Footnote 3</b> - See EWBG method INDICATOR 3 for more information. Check for presence of the following invasive non-native species: American skunk cabbage <i>Lysichiton americanus</i>; Himalayan balsam <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>; Japanese knotweed <i>Fallopia japonica</i>; Cherry Laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>; Shallon <i>Gaultheria shallon</i>; Snowberry <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>; Variegated yellow archangel <i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum</i>; and Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>.</p> <p><b>Footnote 4</b> - 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 (e.g. glades, rides, footpaths, areas of clear-fell). This differs from permanent open space where tree regeneration is not possible or desirable (e.g. tarmac, buildings, rivers). Area is at least 10m wide with less than 20% covered by shrubs or trees.</p> <p><b>Footnote 5</b> - 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, the regeneration indicator is gathers additional information by considering regeneration potential i.e. if seedlings, saplings and young trees are all present that means natural regeneration processes are happening.</p> <p><b>Footnote 6</b> - This indicator is looking 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.</p> <p><b>Footnote 7</b> - See EWBG method INDICATOR 12 for more information. All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its biodiversity, cultural and heritage value. Veteran trees can be classified if they have four out of the five following features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rot sites associated with wounds which are decaying &gt;400 cm<sup>2</sup>;</li> <li>2. Holes and water pockets in the trunk and mature crown &gt;5 cm diameter;</li> <li>3. Dead branches or stems &gt;15 cm diameter;</li> <li>4. Any hollowing in the trunk or major limbs;</li> <li>5. Fruit bodies of fungi known to cause wood decay.</li> </ol> <p><b>Footnote 8</b> - See EWBG method INDICATOR 15 for more information. Examples of disturbance are: significant nutrient enrichment; soil compaction from trampling, machinery or animal poaching; litter.</p>	

## APPENDIX 4 – HEDGEROW CONDITION ASSESSMENT

UKHab Habitat Type		
<b>Native hedgerow</b> Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch Native hedgerow with trees Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch Native species rich hedgerow Native species rich hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch Native species rich hedgerow with trees Native species rich hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch		
Habitat Description		
See Table TS1-3		
Condition Assessment Criteria		
A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics, are used for this assessment. The attributes, and the minimum criteria for achieving a favourable condition in each, are defined. The attributes use similar favourable condition criteria to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook and the handbook is the recommended source of reference for assessing individual hedgerow attributes.		
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes		
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)	Criteria (the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition')	Description
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 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).
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 (e.g. blackthorn suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they >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 (unless 'line of trees')	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).



<p>B2. Gap - hedge canopy continuity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Gaps make up &lt;10% of total length and</li> <li>· No canopy gaps &gt;5 m</li> </ul>	<p>This is the horizontal gappiness of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small).</p> <p>Access points and gates contribute to the overall gappiness, but are not subject to the &gt;5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).</p>
<p>C1. Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation</p>	<p>&gt;1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for &gt;90% of length:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and</li> <li>· is present on one side of the hedge (at least)</li> </ul>	<p>This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedge.</p> <p>Undisturbed ground should be present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedge.</p> <p>This criterion recognises the value of the hedge 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.</p>
<p>C2. Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation</p>	<p>Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate &lt;20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground</p>	<p>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, should not exceed the 20% cover threshold.</p>
<p>D1. Invasive and neophyte species</p>	<p>&gt;90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native and neophyte species</p>	<p>Neophytes are plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500. For information on neophytes see the JNCC website and for information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.</p>
<p>D2. Current damage</p>	<p>&gt;90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities</p>	<p>This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes.</p> <p>This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (e.g., excessive hedge cutting).</p>

Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only		
E1. Tree age	At least one mature tree per 30m stretch of hedgerow. A mature tree is one that is at least 2/3 expected fully mature height for the species.	This criterion addresses if there are sufficient mature trees (within the scope of planning timescales) which are of higher value to biodiversity.
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.
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees		
Category	Maximum number of attributes that can fail to meet 'favourable condition' criteria in Table TS1-2	Metric Score
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; <b>AND</b> No more than 1 in any functional group.	3
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; <b>AND</b> Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 & C2 = Moderate condition).	2
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; <b>OR</b> Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (e.g., fails attributes A1, A2, B1 & B2 = Poor condition).	1
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees		
Category	Maximum number of attributes that can fail to meet 'favourable condition' criteria in Table TS1-2	Metric score
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; <b>AND</b> No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total; <b>AND</b> Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (e.g., fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 & E1 = Moderate condition).	2
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; <b>OR</b> Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 & B2 = Poor condition).	1

## APPENDIX 5 - PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The table below details the key paragraphs from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>4</sup> relating to the natural environment:

TABLE 2: NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	
Statement	Paragraph
<p>Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);</li> <li>b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;</li> <li>c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and</li> <li>f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate</li> </ul>	174
Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework <sup>5</sup> ; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.	175
Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads <sup>6</sup> . The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.	176
<p>When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development<sup>7</sup> other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;</li> <li>b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and</li> <li>c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated</li> </ul>	177
Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 176), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the	178

<sup>4</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), Department for Communities and Local Government,

<sup>5</sup> Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

<sup>6</sup> English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.

<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of paragraphs 177 and 178, whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

TABLE 2: NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	
Statement	Paragraph
special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.	
To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity<sup>8</sup>; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation<sup>9</sup>; and</li> <li>b) 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.</li> </ul>	179
When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;</li> <li>b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;</li> <li>c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons<sup>63</sup> and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and</li> <li>d) 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.</li> </ul>	180
The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;</li> <li>b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites<sup>10</sup>; and</li> <li>c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.</li> </ul>	181
The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.	182

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Planning Practice Guidance<sup>11</sup> states:

<sup>8</sup> Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

<sup>9</sup> Where areas that are part of the Nature Recovery Network are identified in plans, it may be appropriate to specify the types of development that may be suitable within them.

<sup>10</sup> Potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area, candidate Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar site.

<sup>11</sup> Planning Practice Guidance: Natural Environment ([www.planningguidance.communities.gov](http://www.planningguidance.communities.gov)) Updated July 2019



- Planning authorities need to consider the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications. (para. 016)
- Information on biodiversity and geodiversity impacts and opportunities needs to inform all stages of development (including site selection and design, pre-application consultation and the application itself). An ecological survey will be necessary in advance of a planning application if the type and location of development could have a significant impact on biodiversity and existing information is lacking or inadequate. (para. 018)
- Even where an Environmental Impact Assessment is not needed, it might still be appropriate to undertake an ecological survey, for example, where protected species may be present or where biodiverse habitats may be lost. (para. 018)
- As with other supporting information, local planning authorities should require ecological surveys only where clearly justified. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity. (para. 018)
- The National Planning Policy Framework encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures. (para. 022)

### PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION

The table below details the relevant legislation for the protected species covered within the scope of the survey.

TABLE 3: SUMMARISED SPECIES LEGISLATION		
Species	Relevant Legislation	Level of Protection
<b>Bats (All species)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (Listed on Schedule 5) - as amended</li> <li>• Classified as protected species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)</li> <li>• Bats are also protected by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) make it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionally kill, injure, or take any species of bat</li> <li>• Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats</li> <li>• Intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts</li> </ul>
<b>Otter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (Listed on Schedule 5) - as amended</li> <li>• Classified as protected species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)</li> <li>• Otters are also protected by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) make it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• intentionally kill, injure, or take otters</li> <li>• intentionally or recklessly disturb otters</li> <li>• intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to otter holts or any place used by the animal for shelter or protection</li> </ul>
<b>Great Crested Newt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (Listed on Schedule 5) - as amended</li> <li>• Classified as protected species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) make it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• intentionally kill, injure, or take great crested newts</li> <li>• intentionally or recklessly disturb great crested newts</li> <li>• intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to any place used by the animal for shelter or protection</li> </ul>



TABLE 3: SUMMARISED SPECIES LEGISLATION		
Species	Relevant Legislation	Level of Protection
<b>Red Squirrel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (Listed on Schedule 5) - as amended</li> <li>Red squirrels are also protected by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) makes it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intentionally kill, injure, or take red squirrels</li> <li>intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to any place used by the animal for shelter or protection or disturb red squirrels whilst they are using such a place.</li> </ul>
<b>Birds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended with the exception of some species listed in Schedule 2 of the Act</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) makes it an offence to (with exceptions for certain species):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird</li> <li>Intentionally take, damage or destroy nests in use or being built (including ground nesting birds)</li> <li>Intentionally take, damage or destroy eggs</li> <li>Species listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA or their dependant young are afforded additional protection from disturbance whilst they are at their nests</li> </ul>
<b>White-clawed Crayfish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) makes it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a white-clawed crayfish from its habitat</li> <li>Sell, offer for sale, advertise for sale, possess or transport for the purposes of selling any live or dead white clawed crayfish</li> </ul>
<b>Badger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection of Badgers Act 1992</li> <li>Badgers are also protected by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996</li> </ul>	<p>The Protection of Badgers Act (1992) makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage a badger sett or any part of it</li> <li>Destroy a badger sett</li> <li>Obstruct access to, or any entrance of a badger sett</li> <li>Disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a badger sett</li> </ul>
<b>Water Vole</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (Listed on Schedule 5) - as amended</li> <li>Water voles are also protected by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) makes it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intentionally kill, injure, or take water voles</li> <li>intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to any place used by the animal for shelter or protection or disturb water voles whilst they are using such a place</li> </ul>
<b>Common reptiles (Slow-worm, Adder, Grass Snake, Common Lizard)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act</li> </ul>	<p>The WCA (1981) makes it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intentionally kill or injure these animals</li> <li>sell, offer for sale, advertise for sale, possess or transport for the purposes of selling any live or dead animals or part of these animals</li> </ul>
<p><i>Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) the offence in section 9(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 of damaging a place of shelter or disturbing those species given full protection under the act is extended to cover reckless damage or disturbance.</i></p>		

### INVASIVE SPECIES LEGISLATION

The table below details the legislation in relation to invasive species and lists those invasive species most likely to be found in this region.

**TABLE 4: SUMMARISED INVASIVE SPECIES LEGISLATION**

Relevant Legislation	Description of Offence	Species <i>(Covered by the Legislation and most likely to be found in this Region)</i>
Listed on Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended)	Section 14 of the WCA (1981) states: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if any person plants or otherwise causes to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Part II of Schedule 9, he shall be guilty of an offence.</li> </ul>	Himalayan balsam Cotoneaster Montbretia Japanese knotweed Giant hogweed Rhododendron Pirri-pirri bur New Zealand pygmyweed Giant rhubarb Japanese rose

## PROTECTED SITE LEGISLATION

### CONTEXT IN REGARD TO THE UK'S EXIT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the UK is no longer bound by the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive. However, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations still applies, which formerly acted to transpose the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into English and Welsh law. These are still referred to below for contextual purposes, as designated site citations and conservation objectives may not have been updated following the changes to applicable legislation and may still refer to the Directives.

### STATUTORILY DESIGNATED SITES

#### Ramsar Site

Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The Convention recognises wetlands as important ecosystems and includes a range of wetland types from marsh to both fresh and salt water habitats. The wetlands can also include additional areas adjacent to the main water-bodies such as river banks or coastal areas where appropriate.

#### Special Protection Area (SPA)

SPAs are classified by the UK Government under the EC Birds Directive and comprise areas which are important for both rare and migratory birds.

#### Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SACs are designated under the EC Habitats Directive and are areas which have been identified as best representing the range and variety of habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the Directive. SACs are designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 unless they are offshore.

#### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

SSSIs are designated as sites which are examples of important flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features. They are notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with improved provisions introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

#### National Nature Reserve (NNR)

NNRs are designated by Natural England under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and support important ecosystems which are managed for conservation. They may also provide important opportunities for recreation and scientific study.

#### Country Parks

Country Parks are statutorily designated and managed by local authorities in England and Wales under the Countryside Act 1968. They do not necessarily have any nature conservation importance, but provide opportunities for recreation and leisure near urban areas.

#### Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

LNRs are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by local authorities in consultation with Natural England. They are managed for nature conservation and used as a recreational and educational resource.

#### NON-STATUTORILY DESIGNATED SITES

##### Non-Governmental Organisation Property

These are sites of biodiversity importance which are managed as reserves by a range of NGOs. Examples include sites owned by the RSPB, the Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trusts.

##### Local Wildlife Site (LWS)

These are sites defined within the local plans under the Town and Country Planning system and are material considerations of any planning application determination. They are designated by the local authority although criteria for designation can vary between authorities.

#### PRIORITY SPECIES

Although not afforded any legal protection, national priority species (species of principal importance, as listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006)), and local and regional priority species, as detailed within the relevant biodiversity action plans, are material considerations in the planning process and as such have been assessed accordingly within this report.

The tables below detail the species/species groups and habitats listed as priorities within the biodiversity action plans of the main Local Planning Authorities' within the north-east of England.

<b>TABLE 5: BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS</b>					
<b>Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan</b>					
<b>Species</b>			<b>Habitats</b>		
Barn Owl	Bats	Black Grouse	Blanket Bog	Built Environment	Brownfield Land
Coastal Birds	Common Seal	Dingy Skipper	Calaminarian Grassland	Coastal heathland	Fen, Marsh & Swamp
Dormouse	Farmland Birds	Freshwater Fish	Gardens & Allotments	Heather Moorland	Lowland Heathland
Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Garden Birds	Great Crested Newt	Lowland Meadows & Pastures	Maritime Cliffs & Slopes	Native Woodland
Grey Seal	Hedgehog	Otter	Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs	Recreational & Amenity Space	Reedbed
Red Squirrel	River Jelly Lichen	Upland Waders	Rivers & Streams	Rocky Shore, Reefs & Islands	Saline Lagoons
Violet Crystalwort	Water Rock-bristle	Water Vole	Saltmarsh & Mudflat	Sand Dunes	Transport Corridors
White-Clawed Crayfish			Trees & Hedgerows	Upland Hay Meadows	Whin Grassland
<b>Durham Biodiversity Action Plan</b>					
<b>Species</b>			<b>Habitats</b>		
Barn Owl	Coastal Birds	Farmland Birds	Native Hedgerows	Veteran Trees, Parkland and Wood Pasture	Woodland and Scrub
Nightjar	Spotted Flycatcher	Upland Birds	Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs	Lowland Fen	Rivers & Streams
Urban and Garden Wildlife	Freshwater Fish	Grass Snake	Blanket Bog and Upland Wet Heath	Calaminarian Grassland	Upland Calcareous Grassland

TABLE 5: BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS					
Great Crested Newt	Reptiles	Chalk Carpet Moth	Upland Dry heath and Acid Grassland	Upland Haymeadows	Upland Screes and Rock Habitats
Cistus Forrester	Dark Green Fritillary	Dingy Skipper	Brownfield Sites	Built Structures	Coastal Habitats
Glow Worm	Grayling	Green Hairstreak	Lowland Heath	Lowland Meadows & Pasture	Magnesian Limestone Grassland
Least Minor Moth	Mud Snail	Northern Brown Argus	Transport Corridors	Waxcap Grassland	
Northern Dart	Round Mouthed Whorl Snail	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary			
White Clawed Crayfish	White-letter Hairstreak	Badger			
Bats	Brown Hare	Dormouse			
Harvest Mouse	Hedgehog	Otter			
Pine Marten	Polecat	Red Squirrel			
Water Vole	Water Shrew	Black Poplar			
Juniper	Pale Bristle-Moss	Yellow Marsh Saxifrage			
<b>Newcastle and North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan</b>					
<b>Habitats</b>			<b>Species</b>		
Brownfield Land	Transport Corridors	Open Water & Wetland	Amphibians	Dingy Skipper	Otter
Rivers and Watercourses	Managed Urban Greenspace	Native Woodland	Urban Birds	Water Vole	Red Squirrel
Lowland Grassland	Scrub, Shrub & Hedgerow	Buildings and Structures	Hedgehog	Slow Worm	Bumblebee
Estuary & Coastal			Brown hare	Farmland Birds	Bats
<b>Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan</b>					
<b>Species</b>			<b>Habitats</b>		
Barn Owl	Ringed Plover	Grey Partridge	Tree Sparrow	Traditional Orchards	Semi-natural Broadleaved Lowland Woodland
Little Tern	Corn Bunting	Shelduck	Wagtail Yellow	Reedbeds	Rivers & Streams
Bittern	Swift	Purple Milk-vech	Water Violet	Arable field Margins	Roadside Verges
Globeflower	Pepper saxifrage	Tufted Sedge	Knotted hedge-parsley	Lowland Meadows	Sand Dunes
Yellow Star of Bethlehem	Burnt Orchid	Green Winged Orchid	Strawberry Clover	School Grounds	Maritime Cliffs and Slopes
Flat Sedge	Small Leaved Lime	Black Poplar	Lyme Grass	Grazing Marsh	Hedgerows
Scarlet Wax Cap	White-letter Hairstreak	Grayling	Dingy Skipper	Gardens and Allotments	Saline Lagoons
Blomer's Rivulet	Crescent Striped	Forester	Large Red-Belted Clearwing	Marsh and Saltmarsh	Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs
Fen Wainscot	Shore Wainscot	Eccentric Grass Snail	Moss Chrysalis Snail	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Lowland Heath
Moss Chrysalis Snail	Bats (except common pipistrelle)	Brown Hare	Harvest Mouse	Brownfields	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Harbour Seal	Water Vole	Common Lizard	Slow Worm		
Great Crested Newt	Bullhead	Salmon	Brown Trout		
European Eel	Brook Lamprey	Sea Lamprey	River Lamprey		
<b>Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan</b>					
<b>Species</b>			<b>Habitats</b>		

TABLE 5: BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS					
Red Wood Ant	Wall Mason Bee	a ground beetle <i>Dyschirius angustatus</i>	Rivers	Lakes, Ponds and Tarns	Hedgerows
a ground beetle <i>Bembidion testaceum</i>	Oxbow Diving Beetle	Barn Owl	Traditional Orchards	Wood-Pasture & Parkland	Semi-natural Woodland
Song Thrush	Pearl Bordered Fritillary	High Brown Fritillary	Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	Calcareous Grassland	Hay Meadows and Pastures
Marsh Fritillary	Netted Carpet	Least Minor	Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	Heathland	Fen, Marsh and Swamp
a caddisfly <i>Glossosoma intermedium</i>	Freshwater Crayfish	Variable Damselfly	Bogs	Montane Habitats	Rock habitats
White-faced Dragonfly	Atlantic Salmon	Schelly	Calaminarian Grasslands	Previously developed land	Coastal Habitats above High Water
Vendace	Southern silver Stiletto-fly	Northern Silver Stiletto-fly	Coastal Intertidal Habitats	Coastal Saline lagoons	Coastal Subtidal Habitats
River Jelly Lichen	a lichen <i>Lobaria amplissima</i>	Pink Waxcap			
Medicinal Leech	Whiskered Bat	Brandt's Bat			
Natterer's Bat	Daubenton's Bat	Noctule			
Common Pipistrelle	Soprano Pipistrelle	Brown Long-eared Bat			
Red Squirrel	Water Vole	Hazel Dormouse			
Sandbowl Snail	a whorl snail <i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	Slender Green Feather-moss			
Great Crested Newt	Natterjack Toad	Pillwort			
Juniper	Northern Hawksbeard	Small White Orchid			