



**envirotech**

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Environmental and Rural Chartered Surveyors

## Biodiversity Net Gain

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## ACCURACY OF REPORT

This report has been compiled based on the methodology as detailed and the professional experience of the surveyor. Whilst the report reflects the situation found as accurately as possible, all of the protected species this survey covers are wild and can move freely from site to site. Their presence or absence detailed in this report does not entirely preclude the possibility of a different past, current or future use of the site surveyed.

We would ask all clients acting upon the contents of this report to show due diligence when undertaking work on their site and/or in their interaction with protected species. If protected species are found during a work programme, and continuing the work programme could result in their disturbance, injury or death, either directly or indirectly an offence may be committed.

If in doubt, stop work and seek further professional advice.

## Quality and Environmental Assurance

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## INTRODUCTION

### ***Purpose of this Report***

Envirotech were requested to carry out a biodiversity assessment of land at John Cotton, Leeds Road. The aim was for an ecologist with botanical expertise to carry out a site visit to map the habitat types present at the site in order to establish the biodiversity baseline.

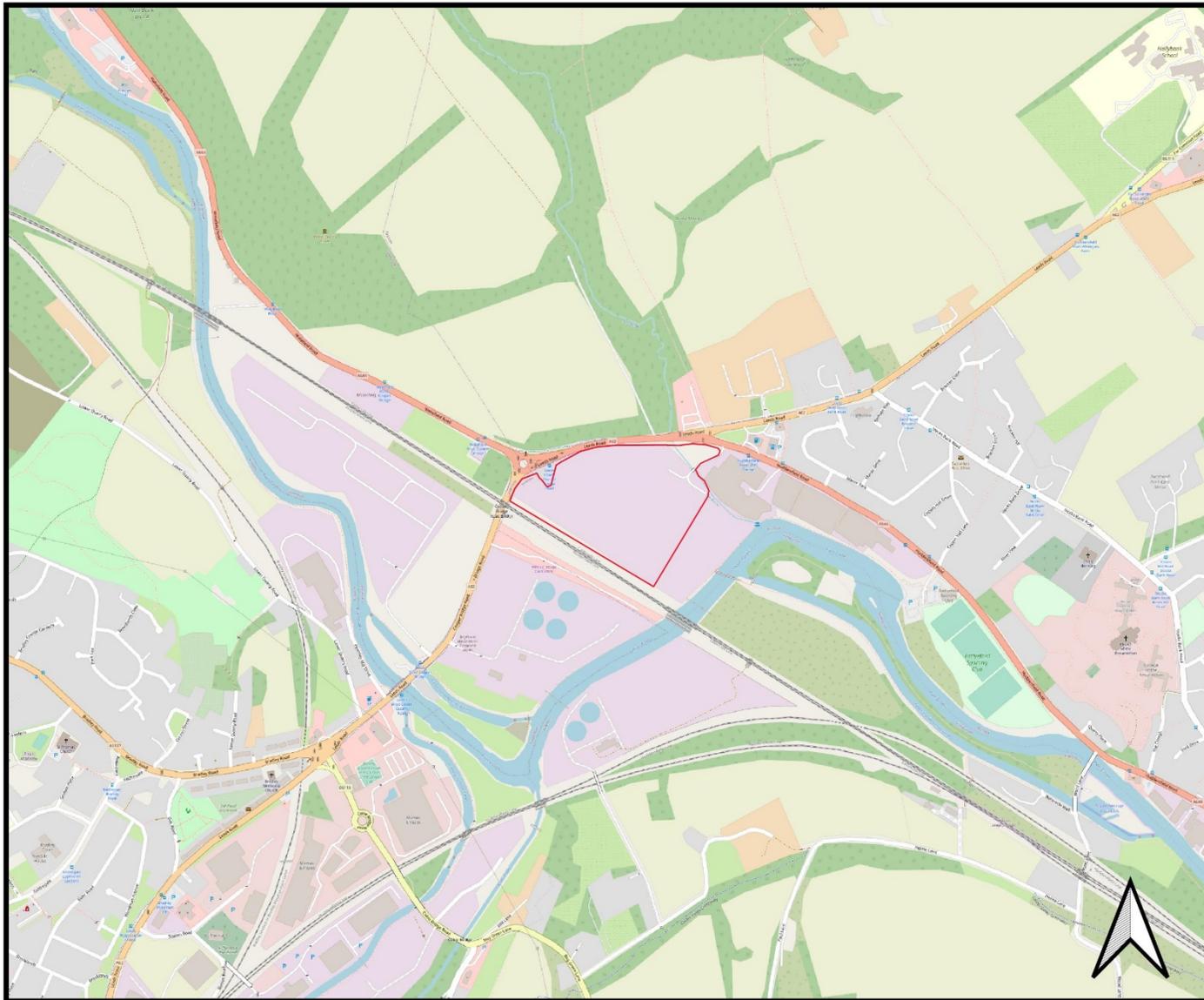
Each habitat type was mapped using the standard habitat mapping convention using Phase 1 habitat survey (JNCC, 2010) which was subsequently converted into the UK Habitat Classification (Butcher et al., 2020) for the purposes of using the Defra metric.

Using the findings of the baseline surveys, pre-construction ecology was measured against proposed habitat changes arising from future ecological enhancements based on an Illustrative Landscape Plan (post-construction) provided by the client.

This report presents the results of this desk-based study to assess net change in biodiversity 'units' in connection with the removal of habitats for the proposed development at the site.

### ***Ecological Context***

The site is 6.12ha and *Figure 1* shows the site location.



□ Boundary

Figure 1  
Site Location



## ***Policy context***

The primary aims of Biodiversity Net Gain are to secure a measurable improvement in habitat for biodiversity, to minimise biodiversity losses and to help to restore ecological networks whilst streamlining development processes.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes provisions for the delivery of biodiversity net gain. Additionally, there is a proposed 10% net gain requirement in the Environment Bill. There is currently no statutory requirement to deliver mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain as the secondary legislation to do so has not yet been brought in.

## **METHODS**

### ***Introduction***

The biodiversity metric 4 is designed to quantify biodiversity to inform and improve planning, design, land management and decision-making (Natural England, 2023).

This study has been carried out as a desk-based exercise, using the results of field surveys carried out at the site by Envirotech and an Illustrative Landscape Plan provided by the client.

### ***Biodiversity Assessment Methods***

To calculate biodiversity units for the site and assess any changes arising from the proposed development this study uses methods set out in the latest Biodiversity Metric 4 user guide (Natural England, 2023).

The biodiversity metric uses three core measurements:

- Habitat area
- Length of linear terrestrial habitats
- Length of linear aquatic habitats.

Consequently, a site can have three biodiversity unit values, which are assessed using the same metric, but cannot be summed together.

Habitat area is multiplied by several factors that indicate its quality: distinctiveness, condition, strategic location and connectivity, and this gives its biodiversity unit value. This can be used for existing and future created habitats. In addition, when habitats are to be enhanced or newly-created, the risk of failure is accounted for by applying multipliers for risk factors (difficulty, time to target condition, and off-site risk).

### ***Habitat Distinctiveness***

Habitats are classified using the phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC 2010) or the UK habitat classification system (Butcher et al., 2020).

The metric pre-assigns each habitat type to a distinctiveness band according to its distinguishing features, i.e. species richness, rarity (at local, regional, national and international scales), and the degree to which it supports species rarely found in other habitats. On rare occasions, the habitat distinctiveness of a habitat can be altered up or down from the preassigned value. Any alterations must then be fully explained using evidence relevant to the site, e.g. an increase in distinctiveness because of rare flora or fauna or a decrease in distinctiveness because of significant damage to the habitat.

### **Habitat Condition**

Habitat condition measures the varying quality of similar habitats against what is perceived to be their optimal state. The biodiversity metric 4 technical supplement (Natural England, 2023) contains condition sheets for all habitats to which the metric can apply. The condition sheets contain a habitat description, contextual information to aid the assessment, and the assessment criteria. The criteria describe what components need to be present for a habitat to be in good, moderate or poor condition.

### **Strategic Location**

Strategic location - sometimes called 'strategic significance' - works at a landscape scale, allowing additional value to be added to habitats in 'priority' or 'biodiversity target areas'. They include statutory and non-statutory sites and other areas with biodiversity value or potential, and they are mainly identified from local plans and objectives. If a habitat is within such a target area, a multiplier is applied to increase its value.

### **Difficulty of Creation and Restoration**

The risks associated with creating new or enhancing existing habitats, are known as difficulty factors; for example, where habitats fail to establish owing to natural changes in local conditions, incorrect management or for unknown reasons. The biodiversity metric 4 contains default values for each habitat based on the average difficulty of creating or enhancing a habitat. Occasionally, under exceptional circumstances, these can be modified, but any deviation from the default value must be fully justified.

### **Time to Target Condition**

There is often a lag between a habitat being removed and the new compensation habitats achieving their target condition. This gives reduced biodiversity value for a time. The biodiversity metric 4 preassigns the time to target condition based on good practice and typical conditions, and assigns a multiplier based on the number of years required to achieve it.

Using bespoke techniques under unique conditions, or creating compensation habitats prior to impacts taking place, the time to target condition can be adjusted. Any changes must again be fully justified.

### **Off-site Risk**

Sometimes it is not possible to compensate adequately for loss of biodiversity within the site boundary, so off-site compensation is required. If the off-site compensation is a significant distance from the development site, then there will be a local loss of biodiversity and a multiplier is applied to any off-site compensation.

## BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

### ***Biodiversity Baseline***

The phase 1 habitat survey map (Figure 2) has been used to identify five habitat areas and one water course area.

These habitats have been input into the Defra Biodiversity Metric 4 calculator and indicate a total of 4.87 area units and 1.22 water course units. The results of the calculations are presented in Appendix A. It should be noted that these represent screenshots from the calculator; the full biodiversity assessment calculation can be found in the Excel document 'BNG John Cottone, Leeds Road'.

The condition assessments for each of the linear and area habitats are presented in Appendix C. No deviations have been made from the default methods for baseline habitats assessment.



-  Boundary
-  Target Note
-  Bare Ground
-  Hardstanding
-  Cultivated/Disturbed Land - Ephemeral/short perennial
-  Tall Herb and Fern - Other Tall Ruderal
-  Woodland - Mixed Semi-Natural
-  Running Water

Figure 2  
Phase 1 Habitat Survey



## ***Post-development Habitat Creation and Enhancement***

The Illustrative Landscape Plan has been used to identify that there will be two retained habitats, one enhanced habitat and three new habitats. There will be one enhanced watercourse habitat.

The landscape scheme is indicative only at this stage.

These figures have been put in to the Biodiversity Metric 4 and would comprise a total of 8.10 biodiversity area units and 1.37 watercourse units.

Hardstanding and woodland is retained.

Other neutral grassland to the site boundary comprising tall ruderals is enhanced with new wildflower planting.

There will be planting of 70 small urban trees in moderate condition.

The watercourse will not be altered but bank encroachment will be reduced. The watercourse was assessed by a surveyor qualified in the use of Morph5 using the cartographer programme. Watercourse condition was "fairly poor" pre-development.

There are no existing hedgerows, but new hedgerow (183m) will be planted. This results in an infinite BNG gain in this category. 0.0001m of hedge has been used as a baseline in order that the BNG template does not show an error code.

There are no changes to default values for post development habitats.

Details of the assumptions made to achieve the proposed conditions are found in Appendix D

## 1.2 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY & DESIGN PRINCIPLES



The following landscape strategy captures the overarching design principles for the proposed development. These have been developed collaboratively between PWP Design, KPP Architects and Envirotech, to ensure there is a holistic, habitat focussed design approach:

- Create a strong green frontage to the site through the retention and enhancement of the existing established tree buffer along the A644 Leeds Road. Tree line to be enhanced with additional native tree scrub and tree planting, as well as meadow/wildflower verges to:
  - Provide structural and species diversity.
  - Future-proof the canopy layer and tree line.
  - Strengthen and enhance habitat value.
  - Improve Green Infrastructure provision.
- Create a strong boundary line that screens the proposed development from adjacent and close proximity residential areas.
- Improve habitat corridors and connectivity in the local and wider context.
- Incorporate a unified planting approach to create a green setting that maximises habitat connectivity and value potential across the proposed development site. Proposed native hedgerows, scrub planting and trees compliment existing retained vegetation, as well as the introduction of new areas of meadow/wildflower verges. There is opportunity for this approach to extend throughout the site forming a series of green connections to the perimeter of the proposed commercial development.
- Create a strong green boundary between the proposed development site and the adjacent residential dwellings with the introduction of a proposed native landscape buffer (in accordance with policy allocation ES9). Planting to screen the proposed development, whilst still providing a valuable habitat connectivity corridor.
- Introduce a palette of native planting into the proposed development site, that compliments the existing species present within the immediate and local context. Planting to diversify retained vegetation to maximise habitat and biodiversity value, provide benefits to air quality through species selection and also provide new habitat areas for wildlife in the area that are currently not present on site. Planting typology to consider long term value, including climate change, long life species and habitat development.

Figure 3- Illustrative landscape plan

## Change in Biodiversity Value

Under the current proposals set out in the Illustrative Landscape Plan there will be a GAIN of 3.23 biodiversity area units (+66.31%), and a GAIN of 0.08 terrestrial linear biodiversity units (+infinite%) and a gain of 0.14 (+11.76%). This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Change in Biodiversity Units Calculation

On-site baseline	Habitat units	4.87	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	1.22	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	8.10	
	Hedgerow units	0.08	
	Watercourse units	1.37	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	3.23	66.31%
	Hedgerow units	0.08	80095.00%
	Watercourse units	0.14	11.76%
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	3.23	
	Hedgerow units	0.08	
	Watercourse units	0.14	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
<b>FINAL RESULTS</b>			
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	3.23	
	Hedgerow units	0.08	
	Watercourse units	0.14	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	66.31%	
	Hedgerow units	80095.00%	
	Watercourse units	11.76%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

## REFERENCES

Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020), UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1 at <http://ukhab.org>

Natural England 2023. Natural England Joint Publication JP039 The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User Guide Defra Group. Natural England.

JNCC. (2010), Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (revised). JNCC, Peterborough.

## APPENDIX A- METRICS TABLES – BASELINE

Ref	Existing area habitats			Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance			Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Ecological baseline Total habitat units	Retention category biodiversity value					Bespoke compensation agreed for unacceptable losses	
	Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic Significance multiplier			Area retained	Area enhanced	Baseline units retained	Baseline units enhanced	Area habitat lost		Units lost
1	Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	4.487	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Compensation Not Required	0.00			0.00	0.00	4.49	0.00	
2	Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.278	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Compensation Not Required	0.00			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
3	Urban	Vacant or derelict land	0.278	Low	2	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	0.56			0.00	0.00	0.28	0.56	
4	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.789	Medium	4	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	3.16	0.7063	0.00	2.82	0.08	0.33		
5	Woodland and forest	Other woodland; mixed	0.289	Medium	4	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	1.16	0.289	1.16	0.00	0.00	0.00		
6																			
7																			
8																			
9																			
10																			
Total habitat area			6.12										4.87	0.57	0.71	1.16	2.82	4.85	0.89
Site Area (Excluding area of Individual trees and Green walls)			6.12																
												Total area lost (excluding area of Individual trees and Green walls)		4.85					

Baseline ref	Existing watercourse type		Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance			Watercourse encroachment		Riparian encroachment		Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Ecological baseline Total watercourse units	Retention category biodiversity value					Bespoke compensation agreed for unacceptable losses	Comments	
	Watercourse type	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance multiplier	Extent of encroachment	M multiplier	Extent of encroachment for both banks	Multiplier	Length retained			Length enhanced	Units retained	Units enhanced	Length Lost	Units Lost		User Comments	Consenting body comments
1	Other rivers and streams	0.2	High	6	Fairly Poor	1.5	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Minor	0.8	Moderate/ Moderate	0.85	Same habitat required =	1.22	0.00	0.20	0.00	1.22	0.00	0.00		
2																							
3																							
4																							
5																							
6		0.20													1.22	0.00	0.20	0.00	1.22	0.00	0.00		

# APPENDIX B- METRICS TABLES – POST DEVELOPMENT

Broad Habitat	Proposed habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance			Temporal multiplier			Difficulty multipliers				Habitat units delivered	Comments					
			Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position multiplier	Standard time to target condition (years)	Habitat created in advance (years)	Delay in starting habitat creation (years)	Standard or adjusted time to target condition	Final time to target condition (years)	Final time to target multiplier	Standard difficulty of creation		Applied difficulty multiplier	Final difficulty of creation	Difficulty multiplier applied	User comments	Consenting body comments	
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	0.19	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	5	0	0	Standard time to target condition applied	5	0.837	Low	Standard difficulty applied	Low	1	1.27			
Urban	Developed land, sealed surface	4.65	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	0	0	0	Standard time to target condition applied	0	1.000	Low	Standard difficulty applied	Medium	0.67	0.00			
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.285	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	27	0	0	Standard time to target condition applied	27	0.382	Low	Standard difficulty applied	Low	1	0.87			
<b>Total habitat area</b>		<b>5.13</b>																		<b>Total Units</b>	<b>2.14</b>		

Baseline ref	Baseline habitats										Proposed Habitat (Pre-populated but can be overridden)		Change in distinctiveness and condition		Area (hectares)	Strategic significance				Temporal multiplier				Difficulty risk multipliers				Habitat units delivered	Comments							
	Baseline habitat	Total habitat area (hectares)	Baseline distinctiveness score	Baseline distinctiveness score	Baseline condition category	Baseline condition score	Baseline strategic significance category	Baseline strategic significance score	Baseline habitat units	Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Proposed Broad Habitat	Proposed habitat	Distinctiveness change	Condition change		Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position multiplier	Standard time to target condition (years)	Habitat enhanced in advance (years)	Delay in starting habitat enhancement (years)	Standard or adjusted time to target condition	Final time to target condition (years)	Final time to target multiplier	Standard difficulty of enhancement	Applied difficulty multiplier	Final difficulty of enhancement		Difficulty multiplier applied	User comments	Consenting body comments					
4	Grassland - Other neutral grassland	0.78	Medium	4	Poor	1	Low Strategic Significance	1	3.16	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	Medium - Medium	Poor - Moderate	0.703	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	10	0	0	Standard time to target condition applied	10	0.550	Low	Standard difficulty applied	Low	1	4.80			
<b>Total habitat area</b>		<b>0.71</b>																																<b>4.80</b>		

New hedge number	Proposed habitats		Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance			Temporal multiplier			Difficulty risk multipliers				Hedge units delivered	Comments						
	Habitat type	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position multiplier	Standard Time to target condition (years)	Habitat created in advance (years)	Delay in starting habitat creation (years)	Standard or adjusted time to target condition	Final time to target condition (years)	Final time to target multiplier	Standard difficulty of creation		Applied difficulty multiplier	Final difficulty of creation	Difficulty multiplier applied	User comments	Consenting body comments		
1	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.063	V.Low	1	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	1	0	0	Standard time to target condition applied	1	0.965	Low	Standard difficulty applied	Low	1	0.08				
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.08</b>																				<b>0.08</b>		

Baseline ref	Baseline habitats										Change in distinctiveness and condition		Length (km)	Habitat distinctiveness		Habitat condition		Strategic significance			Temporal multiplier				Difficulty multipliers				Watercourse encroachment		Pipework encroachment		Watercourse units delivered	Comments					
	Baseline habitat	Length (km)	Baseline distinctiveness score	Baseline distinctiveness score	Baseline condition category	Baseline condition score	Baseline strategic significance category	Baseline strategic significance score	Baseline habitat units	Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Total units	Proposed Watercourse Type (Pre-populated but can be overridden)		Distinctiveness movement	Condition movement	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position multiplier	Standard Time to target condition (years)	Habitat enhanced in advance (years)	Delay in starting habitat enhancement (years)	Standard or adjusted time to target condition	Final time to target condition (years)	Final Time to target multiplier	Standard difficulty of enhancement	Applied difficulty multiplier	Final difficulty of enhancement	Difficulty multiplier applied	Extent of encroachment	Multiplier	Extent of encroachment for both banks	Multiplier		Watercourse units delivered	User comments	Consenting body comments	GIS reference number		
1	Other rivers and streams	0.2	High	6	Fairly Poor	1.5	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some habitat required	1.204	Other rivers and streams	High - High	Fairly Poor - Fairly Poor	0.2	High	6	Fairly Poor	1.5	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	1	0	0	Standard time to target condition applied	1	0.985	Medium	Standard difficulty applied	Medium	0.67	Minor	0.8	Minor Minor	0.66	1.37		
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.28</b>																																	<b>1.37</b>				

## APPENDIX C – BASELINE DETAILED CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

This appendix presents the assessment of the post-development habitats against the condition sheets in the biodiversity metric 4 technical supplement published by Natural England, 2023. Any deviations from the published guidance is explained and justified.

UK Hab Equivalent	Condition Sheet	Other Habitat Criteria Score									Total Score	Condition Assessment	Notes
		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9			
Other neutral grassland	GRASSLAND: Medium-Very High distinctiveness	F	F	F	P	F	F				1	Poor	Tall ruderals
Vacant/derelict land/bareground	URBAN	F	F	F							0	Poor	Bare ground and rubble
<b>Key:</b> P – Criteria passed F – Criteria failed													

**Appendix Table C1: Condition Assessment for Area Habitats**

Phase 1 Habitat	UK Hab Equivalent	Condition Sheet	Other Habitat Criteria Score													Total Score	Condition Assessment	Notes		
			C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13					
Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Other woodland mixed	WOODLAND AND FOREST	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	18	Poor	
<b>Key to woodland condition assessment:</b> 3 (points) = Good 2 (points) = Moderate 1 (point) = Poor  Total score >32 – Good Total score 26 – 32 – Moderate Total score <26 – Poor																				

**Appendix Table C2: Woodland Condition Assessment**

## APPENDIX D – POST DEVELOPMENT DETAILED CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

This appendix presents the assessment of the post-development habitats against the condition sheets in the biodiversity metric 4 technical supplement published by Natural England, 2023. Any deviations from the published guidance is explained and justified.

UK Hab Equivalent	Condition Sheet	Other Habitat Criteria Score									Total Score	Condition Assessment	Notes
		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9			
Other neutral grassland	GRASSLAND: Medium-Very High distinctiveness	P	P	F	P	P	P	F			5	Moderate	
Scrub	Scrub	P	F	P	P	P					4	Moderate	
Urban trees	URBAN TREES	P	P	F	P	F	P				4	Moderate	
<b>Key:</b> P – Criteria passed F – Criteria failed													
<b>Appendix Table D1: Condition Assessment for Area Habitats</b>													