



Essential Ecology

Courtlands

Biodiversity Gain Statement

(Ref: ESEC/26006/02/v1.0)

Prepared by Essential Ecology
on behalf of Courtlands Independent Special School

May 2026

Quality Control

This report and associated survey work have been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM's) Code of Conduct, by which Essential Ecology's employees are bound.

In line with guidance set out by CIEEM, this report is considered to remain valid for 12-18 months from the date of issue, whilst survey work is typically valid for 12-18 months from the date of completion.

The recommendations and conclusions are valid for the current proposals only. Should the proposals plans be amended, the report will need to be updated and where appropriate informed by additional/update survey work.

Report Ref.	Issue Date	Revision	Surveyor(s)	Author	Comments
ESEC/26006/02	19/05/2026	V1.0	TS	MJ	

Important Information

Essential Ecology is the trading name of Essential Ecology Ltd.

© This document is the copyright of Essential Ecology, all rights reserved and therefore the contents must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part for any purpose without the written consent of Essential Ecology.

This document has been prepared for the sole use of the client, based on the scope of works agreed directly with the client at the time of writing. No liability is accepted by Essential Ecology for any use of this report other than for the purposes intended as set out under 'Purpose of Report'. The content of this report is in part based upon information provided by third parties and on the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested. Third party information has not been independently verified by Essential Ecology and no liability is accepted by Essential Ecology where reliance is placed on information provided by third parties. No warranty, express or implied, is made as to the advice in this document. This document is subject to the restrictions and limitations referenced in Essential Ecology's standard Terms of Business.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation. Essential Ecology employees are not legal specialists and therefore the information set out within this report does not constitute a legal opinion on the relevant legislation. Where required, a legal professional should be consulted.

This document may contain sensitive ecological information. It is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to determine whether information set out within this document should be made publicly available.

Contact Us

a: 25 Katmandu Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 2SP

t: 07841 042796 | **e:** info@essentialecology.co.uk | **w:** www.essentialecology.co.uk

Contents

1. Executive Summary..... 1

2. Introduction 2

3. Methodology..... 4

4. Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy 5

5. Conclusions 8

6. References 9

Drawings

ESEC/26006/02-01	Baseline Habitats
ESEC/26006/02-02	Post-development Habitats

Appendices

Appendix 1	Proposed Location & Site Plan (Arch Evolve, drawing ref: ARC/ 012/ 26/ 63)
Appendix 2	Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets – Baseline
Appendix 3	Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets – Post-development

1. Executive Summary

Table 1.1. Executive Summary	
Section	Summary
Introduction and Methodology	A Biodiversity Gain Statement, informed by the Statutory Metric, has been prepared by Essential Ecology (ESEC) on behalf of Courtlands Independent Special School for the site at Courtlands. The assessment is based on a UK Habitat survey and the proposals provided for the developable area and has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Statutory Metric User Guide.
Biodiversity Gain Assessment and Strategy	The proposals include provision of additional facilities for the existing school, including classrooms and MUGA. Subject to the information set out within this report (including the implementation of measures described above) and the accompanying Statutory Metric, the proposals will result in a net loss of habitat and no net change of hedgerow units. No existing linear watercourse features are present on or within 10m of the developable area.
Conclusions	The proposals in their current form result in a net loss of habitat and no net change of hedgerow units and therefore are not compliant with the legislation pertaining to BNG. As such, additional units will need to be acquired from a habitat bank in order for the pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition to be discharged.

2. Introduction

2.1 Terms of Reference

- 2.1.1 Essential Ecology (ESEC) has been commissioned by Courtlands Independent Special School to provide a Biodiversity Gain Statement to inform a planning application for the site, located at Courtlands (central ordnance survey (OS) grid reference TQ 11916 02440).
- 2.1.2 The assessment for the developable area will be submitted to Worthing Borough Council to inform the planning application.

2.2 Site/Developable Area Location and Overview

- 2.2.1 The site, which incorporates the developable area, is located west of Parklands Avenue and north of Alinora Crescent in Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex. Within a wider context, the site is surrounded primarily by residential development.
- 2.2.2 The developable area itself, as shown by the red line boundary, comprises an area of c. 1.2ha. The developable area comprises Developed land; sealed surface, modified grassland, ruderal/ephemeral, Introduced shrub, Other broad-leaved woodland, Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, urban trees, native hedgerow, native hedgerow with trees and non-native and ornamental hedgerow.

2.3 Description of Proposals

- 2.3.1 Change of use of the site from a care/school facility with overnight accommodation (Class C2) (approved under reference AWDM/2234/21 and AWDM/2235/21) to a Special Educational Needs (SEN) School (Class F1) for up to 80 pupils, including the removal of previously approved overnight accommodation, retention of two replacement outbuildings (retrospective sheds), erection of lodge-style classroom buildings, installation of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), and associated internal and external works (see Appendix 1).

2.4 Purpose of Report

- 2.4.1 On the basis of the proposals, the development will be subject to the biodiversity gain condition. The purpose of this Biodiversity Gain Statement is to provide the local planning authority with sufficient information in order to assist the consideration of biodiversity net gain as part of the determination of the planning application.

2.5 Quality Assurance and Management

- 2.5.1 The site survey work has been undertaken by Tom Staton. Tom has over 15 years' experience in professional ecological consultancy and holds a Master's degree in Biological Recording and Ecological Monitoring and a PhD in Ecology and Agri-environmental Research. Tom has experience in undertaking numerous habitat/botanical surveys, including extended Phase 1, UK

Hab, NVC and ancient woodland indicator surveys across a range of sites and development projects in the UK. Tom has experience in undertaking numerous biodiversity net gain assessments across a range of sites and development projects in England.

2.5.2 The Biodiversity Gain Statement has been prepared by Megan Jewson (Director). Megan has over 13 years' experience in professional ecological consultancy, is a full member of CIEEM and holds a Master's degree in Biodiversity and Conservation. Megan has experience in undertaking numerous biodiversity net gain assessments across a range of sites and development projects in England, since the Warwickshire pilot in 2012.

2.5.3 This report and the associated Statutory Metric have been produced with reference to the relevant legislation and current best practice guidance produced by DEFRA, including '*Statutory biodiversity metric: user guide*' (DEFRA 2024), as well as British Standard (BS) 8683:2021 (The British Standards Institution 2021) which sets out the process for designation and implementing biodiversity net gain.

3. Methodology

3.1 Habitat Survey

3.1.1 The developable area was surveyed on 6th February 2026 based on UK Habitat Classification Survey (v2) (UKHab Ltd 2023) methodology. This involves identifying and mapping habitat types. The condition of each habitat has been assessed in accordance with technical Annex 1 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric '*Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology*' (DEFRA 2024).

3.2 Statutory Metric

3.2.1 To quantify the level of biodiversity net gain that can be achieved under the proposed development, the change in biodiversity value has been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (DEFRA 2024). The Statutory Metric has been completed in accordance with the relevant legislation and accompanying user guide (DEFRA 2024). The metric is based on the UK Habitat survey undertaken by Essential Ecology and the proposals plan provided (see Appendix 1).

3.3 Survey and Assessment Limitations

3.3.1 The UK Habitat Classification Survey was undertaken in February, outside the optimum survey season. Nevertheless, given the nature of the developable area which is actively used and managed as a school, it is considered that the data collected represents a valid sample of ecological evidence present for that date/season and provides a robust assessment of the habitats.

4. Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The relevant date for the pre-development biodiversity value is 1st January 2026. This is understood to be the date prior to the construction of Shed 2.

4.1.2 All of the land within the developable area, as shown by the red line boundary, has contributed to the overall biodiversity net score. There are no other schemes in place in the developable area which would mean it can only contribute in part or not at all (e.g., suitable alternative green space (SANG), nutrient neutrality or environmental impact assessment compensation).

4.2 Statutory Metric

4.2.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool has been used to complete the assessment. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the User Guide (DEFRA 2024).

4.2.2 The developable area comprises only of habitats and linear hedgerow features. No linear watercourse features have been identified on or within 10m of the developable area.

4.2.3 Coding for strategic significance of habitats pre- and post-development should be based on Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Where these are not yet in place, strategic significance of habitats has been based on their inclusion within Local Plans, strategies or policies, such as the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. In this instance, trees, woodland, pond and hedgerows have been assigned strategic significance in accordance with Local Policy DM18 and DM19 of the Worthing Local Plan 2023 (Worthing Borough Council 2023).

Baseline

Habitats

4.2.4 Baseline habitats are shown at drawing ESEC/26006/02-01, whilst condition assessment sheets are provided at Appendix 2.

4.2.5 The developable area comprises very low to high distinctiveness habitats in the form of:

- Very Low – Developed land; sealed surface (condition N/A)
- Low – Modified grassland (poor condition), Ruderal/ephemeral (poor condition), Introduced shrub (condition N/A).
- Medium – Other woodland; broadleaved (poor condition), Individual trees (moderate and good condition).
- High – Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (poor condition).

4.2.6 None of the habitats within the developable area form irreplaceable habitats.

Hedgerows

4.2.7 Baseline hedgerows are shown at drawing ESEC/26006/02-01, whilst condition assessment sheets are provided at Appendix 2.

4.2.8 The developable area comprises very low to medium distinctiveness hedgerows in the form of:

- Very Low – Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (condition N/A).
- Low – Native hedgerow (good condition)
- Medium – Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)

Post-development

Habitats

4.2.9 Post-development habitats are shown at drawing ESEC/26006/02-02, whilst condition assessment sheets are provided at Appendix 3.

4.2.10 Following development, the developable area will comprise very low to high distinctiveness habitats in the form of:

- Very Low – Developed land; sealed surface (condition N/A)
- Low – Modified grassland (poor condition), Ruderal/ephemeral (poor condition), Introduced shrub (condition N/A).
- Medium – Other woodland; broadleaved (poor condition), Individual trees (moderate and good condition).
- High – Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (poor condition).

4.2.11 Given the nature of the developable area as an actively used school, no habitat enhancements are proposed.

Hedgerows

4.2.12 Post-development hedgerows are shown at drawing ESEC/26006/02-02, whilst condition assessment sheets are provided at Appendix 3.

4.2.13 Following development, the developable area will comprise very low to medium distinctiveness hedgerow in the form of:

- Very Low – Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (condition N/A).
- Low – Native hedgerow (good condition)
- Medium – Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)

4.2.14 Given the nature of the developable area as an actively used school, no habitat enhancements are proposed.

Results

4.2.15 Subject to the information set out within this report and the accompanying Statutory Metric, the table below provides a summary of the overall results:

Table 4.1: BNG Results Summary					
Habitat Type	Baseline Units	Post-development Units	Net Change Units		Unit Deficit to achieve 10%
			Units	%	
Habitats	5.06	4.71	-0.35	-7.00	0.86
Hedgerows	1.03	1.03	+0.00	+0.00%	0.10

4.2.16 On the basis of the results, the current proposals for the developable area, and as shown at drawing no. ESEC/26006/02-02, result in a net loss of habitat units and no net change of hedgerow units. The proposals are therefore not considered to be compliant with the legislation pertaining to BNG. As such, additional habitat and hedgerow units will need to be acquired from a habitat bank in order for the pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition to be discharged. In addition, to the unit deficit shown, additional units may also need to be acquired to address the metrics trading rules. As such, units will likely need to include medium distinctiveness woodland, trees and hedgerows.

4.3 Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

4.3.1 The proposals for the developable area largely impact habitats and hedgerows of low distinctiveness in the form of modified grassland and non-native and ornamental hedgerow. Low distinctiveness habitats are subject to less stringent requirements within the Biodiversity Net Gain hierarchy.

4.3.2 The proposals have been designed to minimise impacts to habitats/hedgerow features of medium/high/very high distinctiveness. As such, losses of these habitats/hedgerow features are minimal as a result of the proposals. Such losses are limited to removal of one tree and xxm² of other broad-leaved woodland.

4.3.3 Consideration was given to provision of enhancements within the developable area, however due to the active nature of the developable area as a school and the need to retain areas of modified grassland for use by students and the difficulty to completely eradicate Schedule 9 species from woodland within the developable area, it was not considered achievable to meet the BNG requirements within the developable area. It is therefore proposed that offsite units are acquired from a habitat bank.

4.3.4 The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1.1 Essential Ecology has undertaken a UK Habitat survey and completed the Statutory Metric in order to inform a Biodiversity Gain Statement for the developable area. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation and User Guide and consideration has been given to the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy.
- 5.1.2 On the basis of the assessment of the proposals using the Statutory Metric, the development within the developable area will result in a net loss of habitat units and no net change of hedgerow units.
- 5.1.3 As such, the proposals are not considered to be compliant with the legislation pertaining to BNG and additional habitat and hedgerow units will need to be acquired from a habitat bank I in order for the pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition to be discharged.

6. References

- DEFRA. 2024. *Statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool* . London: DEFRA.
- DEFRA. 2024. *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide* . London: DEFRA.
- The British Standards Institution. 2021. *Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain - Specification*. London: BSI Standards Limited.
- UKHab Ltd. 2023. "UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0." *UK Habitat Classification website*. Accessed 2024. <https://www.ukhab.org>.
- Worthing Borough Council. 2023. "Worthing Borough Council: Local Plan 2020 - 2036 (Adopted 28th March 2023)."

Drawings



Key:

- Developable Area
- Developed land; sealed surface [0.268ha]
- Modified grassland [0.641ha]
- Introduced shrub [0.021ha]
- Ruderal/Ephemeral [0.003ha]
- Other broad-leaved woodland [0.17ha]
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland [0.076ha]
- Non-native and ornamental hedgerow [0.139km]
- Native hedgerow with trees [0.027km]
- Native hedgerow [0.073km]
- Urban tree [0.207 ha]

Project:
Courtlands

Drawing Title:
Baseline Habitats

Drawing No:
ESEC/26006/02-01
Date:
May 2026

Rev:
A



a: 25 Katmandu Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 2SP
t: 07841 042796 | e: info@essentialecology.co.uk
w: www.essentialecology.co.uk



- Key:**
- Developable Area
 - Developed land; sealed surface [0.054ha]
 - Retained Developed land; sealed surface [0.268ha]
 - Retained Modified grassland [0.594ha]
 - Retained Introduced shrub [0.021ha]
 - Retained Ruderal/Ephemeral [0.003ha]
 - Retained Other broad-leaved woodland [0.162ha]
 - Retained Lowland mixed deciduous woodland [0.076ha]
 - Retained native hedgerow [0.073km]
 - Retained Native hedgerow with trees [0.027km]
 - Retained Non-native and ornamental hedgerow [0.139km]
 - Retained Urban Tree [0.191 ha]

Project:
Courtlands

Drawing Title:
Post-development Habitats

Drawing No:
ESEC/26006/02-02
Date:
May 2026

Rev:
A



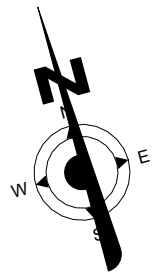
a: 25 Katmandu Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 2SP
t: 07841 042796 | e: info@essentialecology.co.uk
w: www.essentialecology.co.uk

Appendices

Notes:

1. THE COPYRIGHT OF THIS DRAWING IS VESTED IN ARCHEVOLVE AND IT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED IN WHOLE OR PART OR USED FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF ANY ARTICLE WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT HOLDERS.
2. WORK TO FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY.
3. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT ARCHITECT'S, SERVICE ENGINEER'S AND ARCHEVOLVE AND SPECIFICATIONS.

- Developable Area
- Site Boundary
- Location of Existing Sheds
- Tree Locations
- Hedge Locations



Revision Number	Revision Description	Issued by	Revision Date
DATE:	STATUS:	SHEET SIZE:	
06/10/25	PLANNING ISSUE	A1	
SCALE:	DRAWN:	CHECKED:	
As indicated	AP		
CLIENT:		SITE ADDRESS:	
Courtlands			

DRAWING: Change of Use

TITLE: Proposed Location & Site Plan

PROJECT NO: COURTLANDS
DRAWING NO: APC/012/26/63
REVISION:



ARCHEVOLVE

✉ // design @archevolve.co.uk

🌐 // www. archevolve.co.uk

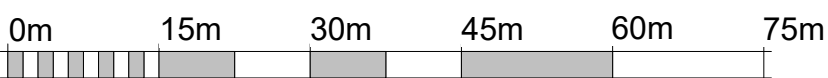
☎ // 01798 879894



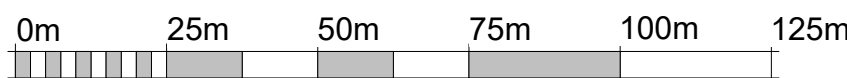
Site Plan
1 : 750



Location Plan
1 : 1250



VISUAL SCALE 1:750 @ A1



VISUAL SCALE 1:1250 @ A1

Habitat	Modified Grassland	Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria		G1	G2	G3								
												Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	N	N	N								
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N	N	N								
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	Y	Y								
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y	Y	Y								
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y	N	Y								
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y	Y	Y								
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y	Y	Y								

Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		N	N	N								
Number of criteria passed		5	4	5								
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓										
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)											
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)											
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	✓	✓	✓								

Habitat	Ruderal/ephemeral	Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria		R/E1										
												Notes (such as justification)
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	N										
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	N										
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ¹) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) ² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area ³ . Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Y										
Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)		Y										
Number of criteria passed		1										
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√									
Results for habitats requiring assessment of 3 core criteria only:												
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Good (3)										

• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)										
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor (1)	✓									

Habitat	Trees	Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria		T1	T2, T6, T9	T3, T7, T8, T10	T4	T5a-c						
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Y	Y	Y	N	N						
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	Y	Y	N	Y	Y						
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Y	N	N	N	N						
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	Y	Y	Y	N						
Number of criteria passed		6	5	4	4	3						
Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/√										
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	✓	✓									
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)			✓	✓	✓						

Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)											
----------------------------	----------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Habitat		Woodland			Parcel reference											
Condition Assessment Criteria					W1	W2	W3									
					Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)	
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator											
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes ¹ present.	Two age-classes ¹ present.	One age-class ¹ present.	1	2	1									
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland ² .	3	3	3									
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species ³ present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, and other invasive species ³ <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ³ ≥10% cover.	1	2	2									
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species ⁴ across woodland parcel.	2	3	3									
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	2	2	2									
F	Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ .	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ .	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . But if woodland	3	3	3									

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

L	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	1	1	1									
M	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident ¹⁴ .	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	3	2	2									
Total Score (out of a possible 39)					24	25	24									
Condition Assessment Result			Condition Assessment Score		Result Achieved											
Total score >32 (33 to 39)			Good (3)													
Total score 26 to 32			Moderate (2)													
Total score <26 (13 to 25)			Poor (1)		✓	✓	✓									

Habitat	Hedgerows			Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria				H1	H3	H5								
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	Y	Y	Y								

A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. 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).	Y	Y	Y									
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	N	Y	Y									

B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Y	Y	Y								
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	Y	Y	Y								

C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Y	Y	Y								
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .	Y	Y	Y								

D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	Y	Y	Y									
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only															
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient ⁸), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.	N	N/A	N/A									

E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.	Y	N/A	N/A										
The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.																
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees																
Category		Category Requirements		Metric Score												
Good		No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.		3												

Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).	2	
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1	
Score achieved:		H3, H5 = Good	
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees			
Category	Category Requirements	Metric score	
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3	
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	2	
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1	
Score achieved:		H1 = Good	

Habitat	Modified Grassland	Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria		G1	G2	G3								
												Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	N	N	N								
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N	N	N								
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	Y	Y								
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y	Y	Y								
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y	N	Y								
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y	Y	Y								
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y	Y	Y								

Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		N	N	N								
Number of criteria passed		5	4	5								
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√										
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)											
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)											
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	✓	✓	✓								

Habitat	Ruderal/ephemeral	Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria		R/E1										
												Notes (such as justification)
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	N										
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	N										
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ¹) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) ² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area ³ . Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Y										
Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)		Y										
Number of criteria passed		1										
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√									
Results for habitats requiring assessment of 3 core criteria only:												
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Good (3)										

• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)										
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor (1)	✓									

Habitat	Trees	Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria		T2, T6, T9	T3, T7, T8, T10	T4	T5a-c							
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Y	Y	N	N							
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y	Y	Y	Y							
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	Y	N	Y	Y							
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y	Y	Y	Y							
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	N	N	N	N							
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	Y	Y	N							
Number of criteria passed		5	4	4	3							
Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/√										
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	✓										
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		✓	✓	✓							

Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)																
Habitat	Woodland	Parcel reference															
Condition Assessment Criteria		W1	W2	W3											Notes (such as justification)		
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)															
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator												
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes ¹ present.	Two age-classes ¹ present.	One age-class ¹ present.	1	2	1										
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland ² .	3	3	3										
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species ³ present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, and other invasive species ³ <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ³ ≥10% cover.	1	2	2										
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species ⁴ across woodland parcel.	2	3	3										
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	2	2	2										

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

K	Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees ¹² per hectare.	One veteran tree ¹² per hectare.	No veteran trees ¹² present in woodland.	1	1	1								
L	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	1	1	1								
M	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident ¹⁴ .	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	3	2	2								
Total Score (out of a possible 39)					24	25	24								
Condition Assessment Result			Condition Assessment Score		Result Achieved										
Total score >32 (33 to 39)			Good (3)												
Total score 26 to 32			Moderate (2)												
Total score <26 (13 to 25)			Poor (1)		✓	✓	✓								

Habitat	Hedgerows			Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria				H1	H3	H5								
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	Y	Y	Y								

A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. 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).	Y	Y	Y									
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	N	Y	Y									

B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Y	Y	Y								
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	Y	Y	Y								

C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Y	Y	Y								
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .	Y	Y	Y								

D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	Y	Y	Y								
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only														
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient ⁸), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.	N	N/A	N/A								

E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.	Y	N/A	N/A										
The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.																
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees																
Category		Category Requirements		Metric Score												
Good		No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.		3												

Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).	2	
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1	
Score achieved:		H3, H5 = Good	
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees			
Category	Category Requirements	Metric score	
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3	
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	2	
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1	
Score achieved:		H1 = Good	



Essential Ecology

Essential Ecology Ltd
25 Katmandu Road
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 2SP

t: 07841 042796

e: info@essentialecology.co.uk

w: www.essentialecology.co.uk