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Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

August 2025

Project Reference: PR-0408-24

Morton House Farm
Birdy Brow
Clitheroe
BB7 9QY

National Grid Reference: SD 68804 40270

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Revision	Date	Amendment
1.1	30/07/2025	Inclusion of an additional area of land in wider ownership for habitat enhancement
-		

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Executive Summary

As part of an ongoing planning application with Ribble Valley Borough Council (Ref No: **3/2024/0867**) at Morton House Farm, Clitheroe, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd were commissioned to carry out a Biodiversity Net-gain (BNG) Assessment by P Wilson & Company. This process follows on from an initial site visit in December 2024, which identified, mapped and condition assessed the habitats present within the red line boundary. An updated site visit was undertaken in July 2024 to inform an additional area for habitat enhancement.

Proposals entail the change of use of land for the construction of a domestic equestrian riding arena incorporating pathways for the applicant and their horses; associated landscaping (hedge planting) to provide additional screening. There are two additional red-line boundaries within the wider ownership set aside for habitat enhancement.

Based on the landscaping proposals, with the incorporation of the off-site area as described, the scheme will result in a **11.16% net-gain** in **Habitat units**, a **13.57% net-gain** in **Hedgerow units**.

In terms of specific unit changes, the metric output indicates a **gain** of **0.09 Habitat units** and **0.01 Hedgerow units**.

In addition, **the trading rules are satisfied for the scheme**, based on the incorporation of the off-site Habitat enhancement.

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.09
	Hedgerow units	0.01
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	11.16%
	Hedgerow units	13.57%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

The above results are based on extensive cooperation between the Ecologist (Tyrer Ecological Consultants) and the applicant / agent (P Wilson & Company), which has resulted in the inclusion of additional areas for biodiversity enhancement.

If proposals are altered, then it may be necessary to re-assess the scheme using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool in order to ascertain the scale of the unit changes on site.

The 'Medium' distinctiveness created habitats (i.e. the native hedgerow and other neutral grassland) are considered significant, and as such they will require a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), detailing management prescriptions for the 30-year period.

Next Steps

All of the created habitats which are of medium distinctiveness in the metric are considered significant, and as such they will require a Habitat Monitoring and Management Plan (HMMP), detailing management prescriptions for the 30-year period.

The created habitats will be secured for 30 years through a planning obligation, such as a Section 106 agreement between the applicant and the Local Planning Authority (LPA). A suitably qualified ecologist is required to undertake scheduled monitoring of the created and enhanced habitats to inform ongoing maintenance for this period, these interim reports will be submitted to the LPA for review (the timings of which will be determined as part of the HMMP). This process ensures compliance with biodiversity commitments. Additional survey and monitoring fees will apply for ongoing assessments and LPA oversight throughout the 30-year period.

After this report has been approved and the application determined the site will need submit a completed biodiversity gain plan and HMMP to discharge the Biodiversity Gain Condition.

Table of Contents

External Appendices

- *Morton House Farm - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, January 2025)
- *PR-0408-24 Morton House Farm - The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool v1.1* (Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, July 2025)

1.0 Introduction & Scope

1.1 As part of an ongoing planning application with Ribble Valley Borough Council (Ref No: 3/2024/0867) at Morton House Farm, Clitheroe, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd were commissioned to carry out a Biodiversity Net-gain (BNG) Assessment by P Wilson & Company. This process follows on from an initial site visit in December 2024, which identified, mapped and condition assessed the habitats present within the red line boundary. An updated site visit was undertaken in July 2025 to inform an additional area for habitat enhancement.

1.2 Proposals entail the change of use of land for the construction of a domestic equestrian riding arena incorporating pathways for the applicant and their horses. There are two additional red-line boundaries within the wider ownership set aside for habitat enhancement. See **Figure 1.1** for a proposed site plan.

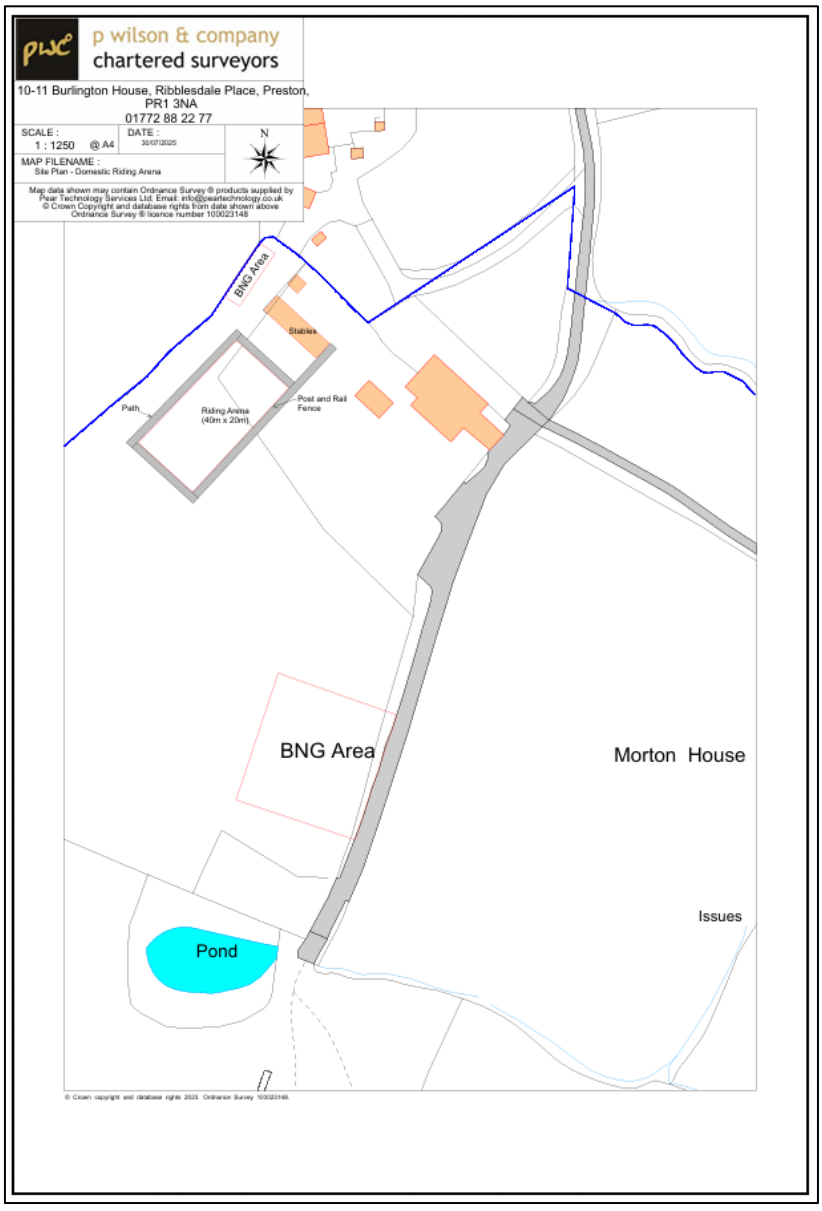

Figure 1.1 – *Proposed site plan (© P Wilson & Company)*

1.3 This BNG Assessment relies on information gathered during the PEA and updated site survey as well as from plans associated with the scheme (see **Point 2.7** of this report for key third-party data sources).

1.4 This assessment uses 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool' as this is the most recent and most appropriate metric for the proposed scheme versus alternatives available. This metric can be used or specified by any development project, consenting body or landowner that needs to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and / or intertidal habitats and has been extensively tested.

National Policy

1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in December 2024, legislates net gain in biodiversity through paragraphs 8(c), 187(d), 192(b) and 193(d). An effort should be made, therefore, through the development design to provide ecological enhancement in order to deliver an overall increase in biodiversity, and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

1.6 The Environment Act 2021 ('The Act') came into force in November 2021. Aspects of the Act relating to BNG came into force on 12th February 2024 for Major developments and 2nd April for minor developments, whereby BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

1.7 The Act is supported by secondary legislation, consisting of six statutory instruments[1] laid within law, of which the relevant legislation includes:

- The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Site Register Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Site Register (Financial Penalties and Fees) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024
- The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024

1.8 Other legislature considered for the purposes of this report includes the following:

- Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development (2019),
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Section 41.

Local Policy

1.9 This national policy mandating Biodiversity Net Gain is reflected in the Ribble Valley Borough Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 with Policy EN4 titled 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' stating:

"Negative impacts on biodiversity through development proposals should be avoided. Development proposals that adversely affect a site of recognised environmental or ecological importance will only be permitted where a developer can demonstrate that the negative effects of a proposed development can be mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for. It will be the developer's responsibility to identify and agree an acceptable scheme, accompanied by appropriate survey information, before an application is determined. There should, as principle, be a net enhancement of biodiversity."

[1] See: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/primary+secondary?title=The%20Biodiversity%20Gain

2.0 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool

2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain is specified as "an approach to development which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before". The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool is a quantitative tool used to calculate how development projects impact upon the biodiversity value of a site and allows for the scale of mitigative / compensatory measures to be calculated by a suitably qualified individual.

2.2 Using the available baseline ecological information gathered and supported by the design information as has been communicated, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool was completed by the following assessor (see **Table 2.1** below):

Table 2.1 – BNG Assessor credentials

Name	Description of most relevant credentials
Miss. J. Collins	• A Junior Ecologist with a range of training and experience; holds a BSc in Wildlife Conservation and MSc in Drone Applications and Wildlife Conservation • Received in-house training from Senior Ecologists as well as attended both external webinars and training courses in applying the Metric, • Undertaken a number of BNG assessments, utilising the Statutory Metric Tool. • Accredited agent on the Natural England Class 2 bat license of Mrs K Wilding CEnv MIEMA ACIEEM (CLS-14227),
Miss R. Brown Qualifying CIEEM	• Consultant Ecologist with a range of training and experience, holds a B.Sc. (Hons.) Environmental Science with over two years of professional training and experience • FISC 4 Botanist. • Undertaken a large number of BNG assessments and extensive training.

2.3 Application of use follows the Biodiversity Net Gain Principles and Rules (DEFRA, July 2025) covered in the most recent User Guide[2] (see **Tables 2.2 – 2.3**), whilst also taking into account the Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles[3], developed by **CIRIA** (Construction Industry Research and Information Association), **CIEEM** (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) and **ISEP** (Institute of Sustainability & Environmental Professionals, formerly IEMA).

2.4 It is a legal requirement that the four BNG Rules are met, whilst the Principles provide guidance for application of use.

[2] See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6866779ee134dfbc2e9e6d39/The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_-_July_2025.pdf
[3] See: https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Biodiversity-Net-Gain-Principles.pdf

Table 2.2 – Biodiversity Metric Rules

Rule Number	Rule Detail
1	The trading rules of this biodiversity metric must be followed.
2	Biodiversity unit outputs, for each type of unit, must not be summed, traded, or converted between types. The requirement to deliver at least a 10% net gain applied to each unit type.
3	To accurately apply the biodiversity metric formula, you must use the biodiversity metric calculation tool or small sites biodiversity metric tool (SSM) for small sites. The tools remove the need for a user to manually calculate the change in biodiversity value. The tool will summarise the results of the calculation and inform a user whether the biodiversity net gain objective has been met.
4	In exceptional circumstances, deviation from this biodiversity metric methodology may be permitted by the relevant planning authority.

Table 2.3 – Biodiversity Metric Principles

Principle Number	Principle Detail
1	The metric assessment should be completed by a competent person.
2	The use of the biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirement. This includes consenting or licencing processes, for example woodlands.
3	The biodiversity metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidelines and professional codes.
4	The biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice.
5	Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values.
6	This biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance.
7	Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe.
8	Created and enhanced habitats should seek, where practical and reasonable, to be local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation.
9	The metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. However, proposals should aim to: • maintain habitat extent (supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks) and • ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function

2.5 Assessment of baseline / post-development Area Habitat / Hedgerow / Watercourse units have been carried out and assessed separately in accordance with the guidance, principles, and rules – where present on site. Any revisions required following the issue of this report will use The Statutory Biodiversity Metric in accordance with the rules of use for that version.

2.6 Measurement of habitats was carried out using a combination of desktop software – QGIS, Google Earth and MAGiC Maps 2025, whilst physical habitat measurements were also taken in the field during ground truthing, where necessary.

2.7 Key third-party data sources and / or information used to help inform this BNG assessment include:

- **Proposed Site Plan including BNG Proposed Enhancement Areas** – *Site plan – Domestic Riding Area,* P Wilson & Company (July 2025)

- **241016 Planning Statement,** P Wilson & Company

2.8 The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report have been assessed by Mrs. K. Wilding, Director of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, and her assessment concurs with the findings and recommendations of Miss. J. Collins and Miss. R. Brown, as well as with other Senior consultants within the company.

3.0 Limitations

3.1 Third-party information was utilised in the completion of the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment (see **Point 2.7**), therefore Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd cannot be held accountable for any possible discrepancies within supporting information.

3.2 The habitat codes of UK Habitats are not, at present, fully aligned with the Biodiversity Metric Calculator. Translations have, therefore, been made between the two categorisations by the assessor, who aims to most accurately represent the biodiversity value of the site and the habitats present.

3.3 Measurements have been calculated utilising software such as 'QGIS' (a Geographic Information System or GIS), aerial imagery and third-party plans provided by the applicant, all of which may have varying levels of inaccuracy, and as such Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd cannot be held accountable for any discrepancies between habitat areas (ha) or linear features (km) stated in this report and other documentation pertaining to the site.

3.4 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric allows for an area / length accuracy to any number of decimal places, however 'Total area'/ 'Total length' is displayed to two decimal places, this may result in small rounding discrepancies on large sites with many small parcels of habitat. However, the metric uses the true value entered into each row to calculate the overall unit change of the site, thus while rounding discrepancies may be displayed under 'Total area'/ 'Total length' these discrepancies do not impact the results of the calculation tool; nonetheless, the reader should be aware that these discrepancies can occur.

3.5 In considering possible limitations, no significant constraints were experienced which might adversely influence the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this BNG assessment, the results of which have been presented in accordance with the rules and principles of use to the satisfaction of the assessor.

4.0 Baseline Strategic Significance & Irreplaceable Habitats

4.1 The Draft Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)[4], The Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy and Lancashire Nature Recovery Interactive Map[5] have been used in combination with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat list and the Lancashire BAP list of habitats to assess the strategic significance. The site lies within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) however, the site falls outside of all areas mapped as part of the Lancashire Nature Recovery Interactive Map. Based upon this information, none of the habitats within the site are considered to be strategically significant, with the exception of the hedgerow present within the red line boundary, which is a UKBAP and LBAP habitat. Thus, the baseline hedgerow has been assigned 'Formally identified within the local strategy' within the metric.

4.2 The site was not host to any irreplaceable habitats, as evidenced in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by Tyrer Ecological Consultants in 2024 and updated visit in July 2025.

[4] https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/963895/lancashire-local-nature-recovery-strategy.pdf
[5] https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d429aa6435b849838af1d2cef68de43b/

5.0 Habitat Degradation

5.1 No habitat degradation has taken place within the red line boundary of the site since the relevant date of 30th January 2020. As such the baseline value of the site has been gathered from the PEA on 3rd December 2024 and the updated site visit at the BNG enhancement area to the north on 21st July 2025.

6.0 Habitat Survey with Metric

On-site Baseline Habitats

6.1 The reader is referred to the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool (hereafter referred to as the Metric)[6], which will accompany this report when issued and should be read in conjunction with this section. See **Tables 6.1 – 6.2** & **Figure 6.1** below for **baseline habitat information** as extracted from the Metric.

6.2 Please refer to **Appendix I** for specific scoring of the condition analyses carried out at the site on a per-habitat basis, as well as the **External Appendices** – PEA for further habitat information.

Table 6.1 – Baseline Habitat information for on-site Area habitats

Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Assessor comments	Habitat Units
Habitat Ref.: 1 **g4** Modified grassland (1)	0.1413	Poor	The entirety of the area within the development red line boundary and the area to the north within wider ownership of the client is comprised of modified grassland, which is currently being actively managed, evident from the very short sward height.	**0.28**
Habitat Ref.: 2 **g4** Modified grassland (2)	0.0090	Poor	An area within wider ownership of the client (not previously assessed during the PEA) located to the north-east of the proposed stables is comprised of modified grassland, which is currently unmanaged. The sward is relatively species poor with approximately 3 species/m2. The area is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) with occasional cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and forbs including common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).	**0.02**
Habitat Ref.: 3 **u1f** Sparsely vegetated land	0.1350	Moderate	An area of sparsely vegetated land located within the wider ownership of the client (not previously assessed during the PEA), to be used as an area of enhancement in line with BNG. The vegetation is comprised of ruderal / ephemeral species such as common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), pineapple weed (*Matricaria discoidea*), chickweed (*Stellaria sp.*) and toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*).	**0.54**
Total Habitat Area	**0.29**		**Total Habitat Units**	**0.84**

[6]*This section of the report should be read in conjunction with the site-specific Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation tool – external Appendix.*

Table 6.2 – Baseline Hedgerow information for on-site Linear habitats

Hedgerow Type	Length (kilometres)	Condition	Assessor comments	Hedgerow Units
Hedge Ref.: 1 **h2a6** Other native hedgerow (***Metric:*** *'Native hedgerow'*)	0.014	Moderate	A newly planted hedgerow consisting entirely of holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), which partially runs through the red line boundary.	**0.06**
Total Hedgerow length	**0.01**		**Total Hedgerow units**	**0.06**

Proposals

6.3 Proposals include the change of use of land for the construction of a domestic equestrian riding arena incorporating pathways for the applicant and their horses. There are two additional red-line boundaries within the wider ownership set aside for habitat enhancement.

6.4 Refer to **Figures 6.1 – 6.2** overleaf for UK Habitats maps of the on-site habitats at the baseline and post-development stage.

On-site Post-Development Habitats

6.5 The reader is again referred to the Metric, see **Table 6.3 – 6.4** for **post-development habitat information** as provided to the author and extracted from the Metric.

Table 6.3 – Post-development Habitat information for on-site Area habitats

Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Assessor comments	Habitat Units
Habitat Ref.: 2 **g4** Modified grassland Enhanced	0.009	Moderate	An area of modified grassland the northern site boundary to be enhanced at by overseeding to increase species diversity in the sward.	**0.03**
Habitat Ref.: 4 **g3c** Other neutral grassland Created	0.1350	Moderate	An area of neutral grassland that will be created using a species-rich native wildflower seed mix, such as a 'neutral grassland' meadow mix[7] and which will be fenced off to ensure correct management practices and to aim to achieve moderate condition.	**0.90**

[7] https://www.habitataid.co.uk/collections/wildflower-seed-meadow-mixes-others

Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Assessor comments	Habitat Units
Habitat Ref.: 5 **u1b6** Other developed land Created (***Metric**: 'Developed land, sealed surface*)	0.0853	N/A	The main area of the equestrian riding arena that will be constructed from recycled rubber and silica sand.	**0.00**
Habitat Ref.: 6 **u1c** Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface Created	0.0560	N/A	Gravel pathways with a wooden border that will form the pathway from the stable block to the riding arena.	**0.00**
Total Habitat area	**0.29**		**Total Habitat Units**	**0.93**

Table 6.4 – Post-development information for on-site Linear habitats

Hedgerow Type	Length (kilometres)	Condition	Assessor comments	Hedgerow Units
Hedge Ref.: 2 **h2a6** Other native hedgerow Created (***Metric:** 'Native hedgerow'*)	0.0190	Moderate	A newly planted hedgerow at the wider ownership boundary to the north of the riding area that will include a mixture of nature species including hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and dog-rose (*Rosa canina*).	**0.07**
Total Hedgerow Length	**0.02**		**Total Hedgerow Units**	**0.07**

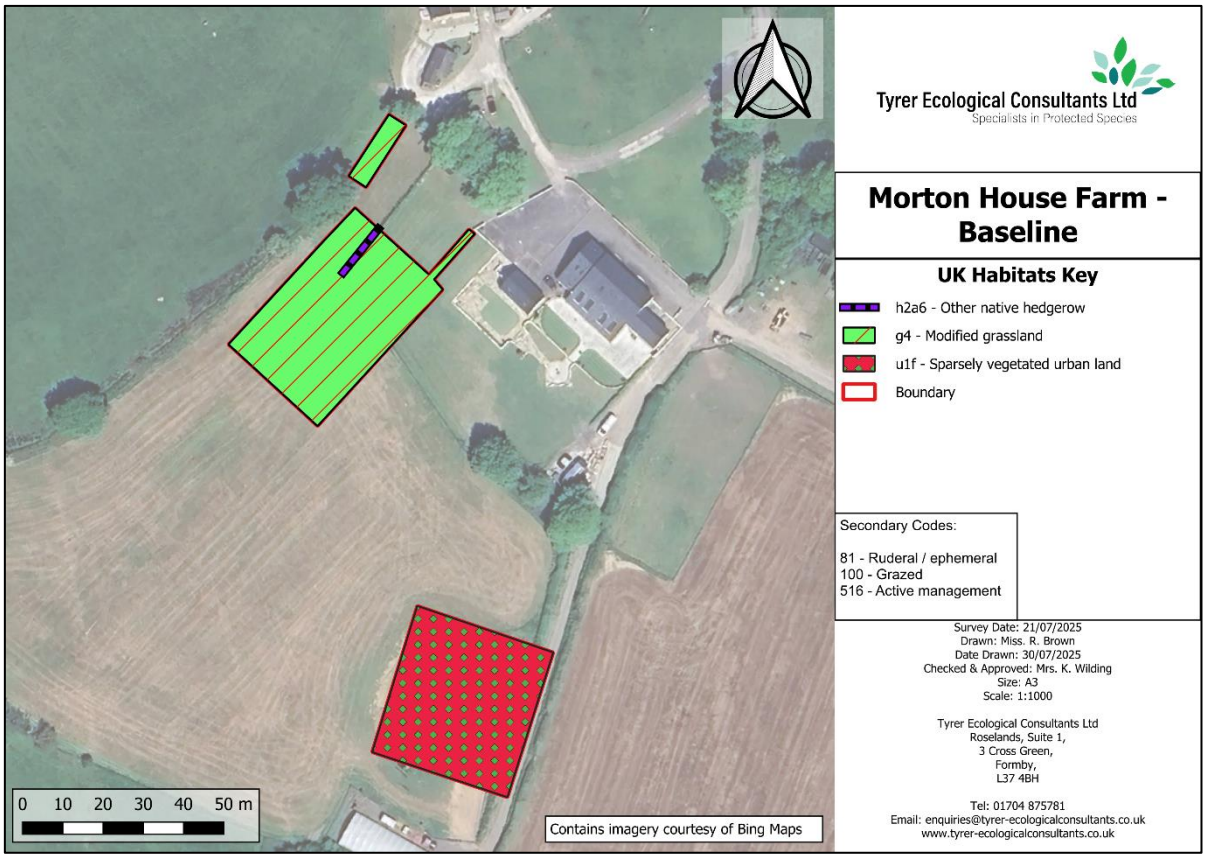

Figure 6.1 – *On-site baseline UK Habitats Map*

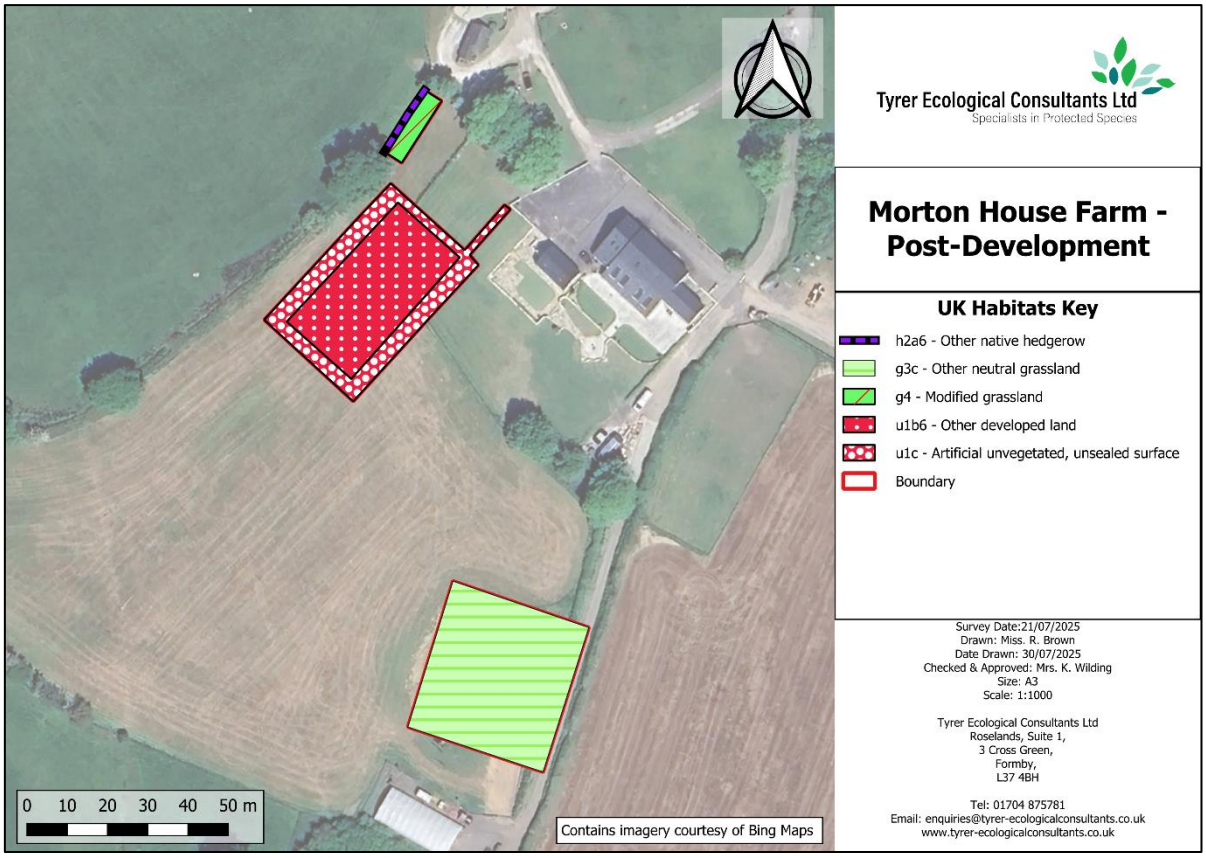

Figure 6.2 – *On-site post-development UK Habitats Map*

7.0 Post-development Strategic Significance

7.1 The proposed native hedgerow qualifies for as a UK BAP Priority Habitat owing to it being comprised of equal to or greater than 80% native woody species.

7.2 Thus the post development hedgerow has been assigned 'Formally identified within the local strategy' within the metric.

7.3 In similarity to the baseline, the site falls outside of all areas mapped as part of the Lancashire Nature Recovery Interactive Map. Based upon this information, all other proposed habitats within the site have been assigned as 'Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy'.

8.0 Significant Enhancements

8.1 The creation of 'medium' distinctiveness habitats, namely the native hedgerow and other neutral grassland, will require a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). All other created / enhanced habitats pertain to only low and very low distinctiveness habitats which will not require a HMMP.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 Based on the landscaping proposals, with the incorporation of the two enhancement areas as described, the scheme will result in a **11.16% net-gain** in **Habitat units** and a **13.57% net-gain** in **Hedgerow units**.

9.2 In terms of specific unit changes, the metric output indicates a **gain** of **0.09 Habitat units** and **0.01 Hedgerow units**.

9.3 In addition, **the trading rules are satisfied for the scheme**.

9.4 See **Figure 9.1** below for Headline results summary of projections as outputted by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric tool.

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.09
	Hedgerow units	0.01
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	11.16%
	Hedgerow units	13.57%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Figure 9.1 – *Headline results summary outputted by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool*

9.5 Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd can confirm that the current iteration of the landscaping proposals was created following consultation between the Ecologist (Tyrer Ecological Consultants) and the applicant / agent (P Wilson & Company), and represents an improvement in terms of habitat units relative to the original design.

9.6 If proposals are altered, then it may be necessary to re-assess the scheme using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool in order to ascertain the scale of the unit changes on site.

Next Steps

9.9 In line with national policy, should planning permission be granted the medium distinctiveness habitats, namely the native hedgerow and other neutral grassland to be created and enhanced will require an HMMP as outlined in Section 8.0, detailing management prescriptions for a 30-year period. This will be subject to a planning obligation, such as a Section 106 agreement between the applicant and the Local Planning Authority (LPA), to secure the habitats for the required 30 years.

9.10 A suitably qualified ecologist is required to undertake scheduled monitoring of the created and enhanced habitats to inform ongoing maintenance for this period; these interim reports will be submitted to the LPA for review (the timings of which will be determined as part of the HMMP). This process ensures compliance with biodiversity commitments. Additional survey and monitoring fees will apply for ongoing assessments and LPA oversight throughout the 30-year period.

9.12 Once the above has been completed, the applicant / agent should submit the completed biodiversity gain plan and HMMP secured for 30 years, as evidenced by any legal agreements (if required) for the required on-site gains. The combination of the above will be required in order to discharge the pre-commencement biodiversity gain planning condition.

10.0 Bibliography

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- **Magic Maps Application**, 2025. Available from: www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx

Appendix I: Condition Assessment Tables

Baseline – On-Site

Baseline Condition Assessment Score – Modified Grassland (Low)

Condition Assessment Criteria		Habitat Reference	
		1	2
		Criterion passed (Y/N)	
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 present, including at least 2 forbs. **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.** Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m^2, 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
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
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* 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
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
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	Y	N
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.	Y	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Y	Y
	Total Score	5	4

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score		
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor	Y	Y

Baseline Condition Assessment Score – Hedgerow

Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)		Criteria	Description	Hedge Reference 1 Condition Achieved
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).	**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 *Prunus spinosa* 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).	**N**
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).	**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).	**N**

Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)		Criteria	Description	Hedge Reference 1 Condition Achieved
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and - is present on one side of the hedge (at least)	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	**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 Urtica spp., cleavers Galium aparine and docks Rumex spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	**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) 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 website4, as well as the BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' 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.	**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**
			Number of Criteria failed	**2**
			Number of Functional Groups failed	**0**

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	Good
No more than 5 failures in total; AND Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	Moderate
Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR Fails both attributes in more than one functional group	Poor

Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)	Criteria	Description	Hedge Reference
			1
			Condition Achieved
(for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).			

Baseline Condition Assessment Score – Sparsely vegetated land (**Habitat Ref.: 3**)

Condition Assessment Criteria		Habitat Reference
		3
		Criterion passed (Y/N)
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.	**Y**
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) 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**
	Total Score	**2**

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Good	
• 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	**Y**
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor	

Post-Development – On-site

*Post-development Condition Assessment Score – Grassland (Low) (**Habitat Ref.:2**)*

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

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good	
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate	**Y**
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor	

*Post-development Condition Assessment Score – Other neutral grassland (**Habitat Ref.:4**)*

Condition Assessment Criteria		*Habitat Reference* 4 Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	The grassland is a good representation of the habitat type it has been identified as, based on its UKHab description - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches the characteristics of the specific grassland habitat type. Indicator species listed by UKHab for the specific grassland habitat type are consistently present. **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.**	**Y**
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	**Y**
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens[1].	**N**
D	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) is less than 5%.	**Y**
E	Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	**Y**
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types		
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m^2 present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type. **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.**	**N**
	Total Score	**4**

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor

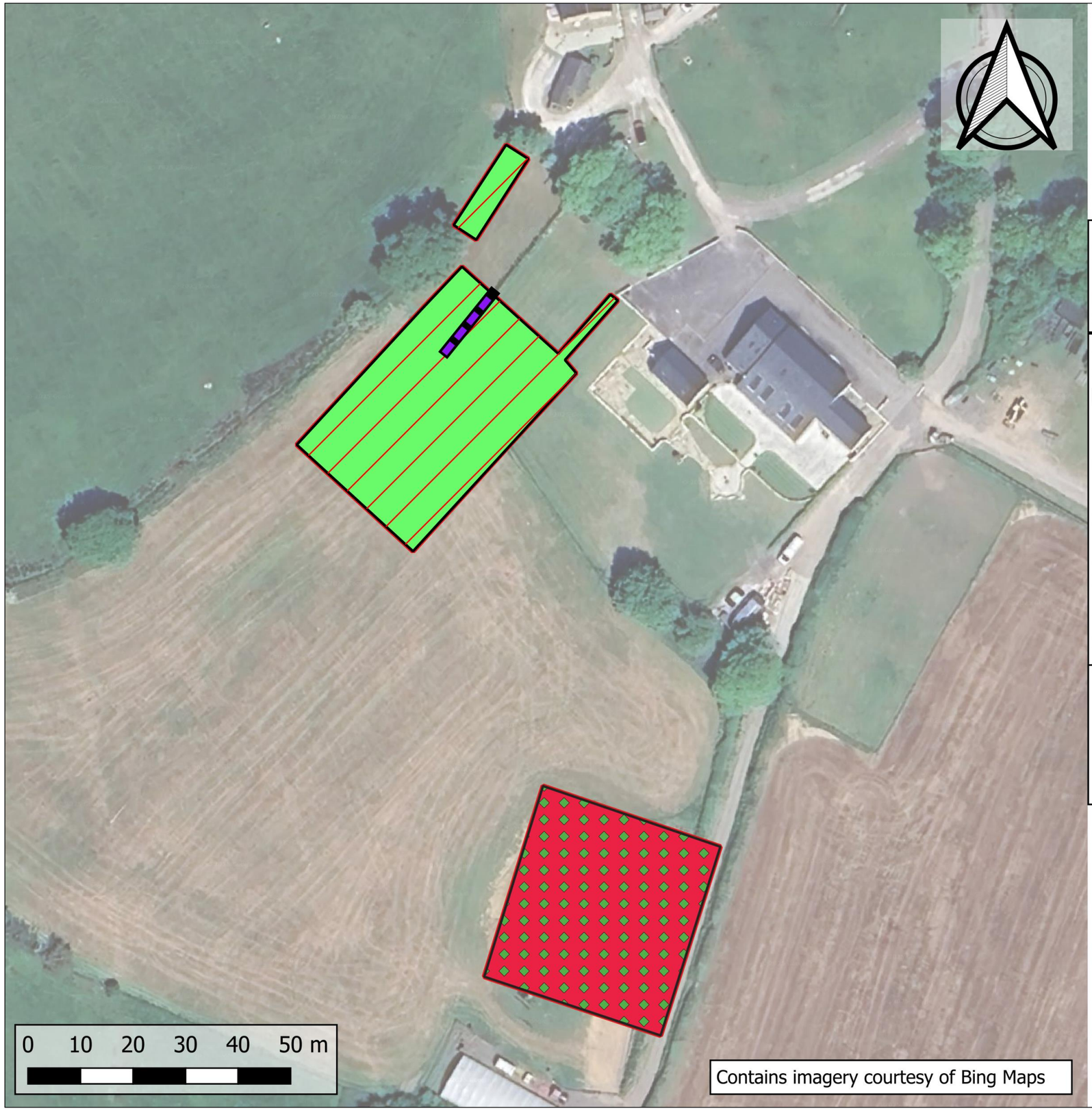
Post-development Condition Assessment Score – Hedgerow ***(Hedge Ref.:2)***

Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)		Criteria	Description	Condition Achieved
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).	**N**
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 *Prunus spinosa* 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).	**N**
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).	**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**

Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)		Criteria	Description	Condition Achieved
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and - is present on one side of the hedge (at least)	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	**N**
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	The indicator species used are nettles Urtica spp., cleavers Galium aparine and docks Rumex spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	**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) 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 website4, as well as the BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' 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.	**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**
			Number of Criteria failed	**3**
			Number of Functional Groups failed	**1**

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	Good
No more than 5 failures in total; AND Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	Moderate
Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	Poor

Appendix II: On-site Baseline UK Habitats Map



Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
Specialists in Protected Species

Morton House Farm - Baseline

UK Habitats Key

- h2a6 - Other native hedgerow
- g4 - Modified grassland
- u1f - Sparsely vegetated urban land
- Boundary

Secondary Codes:

81 - Ruderal / ephemeral
100 - Grazed
516 - Active management

Survey Date: 21/07/2025
Drawn: Miss. R. Brown
Date Drawn: 30/07/2025
Checked & Approved: Mrs. K. Wilding
Size: A3
Scale: 1:1000

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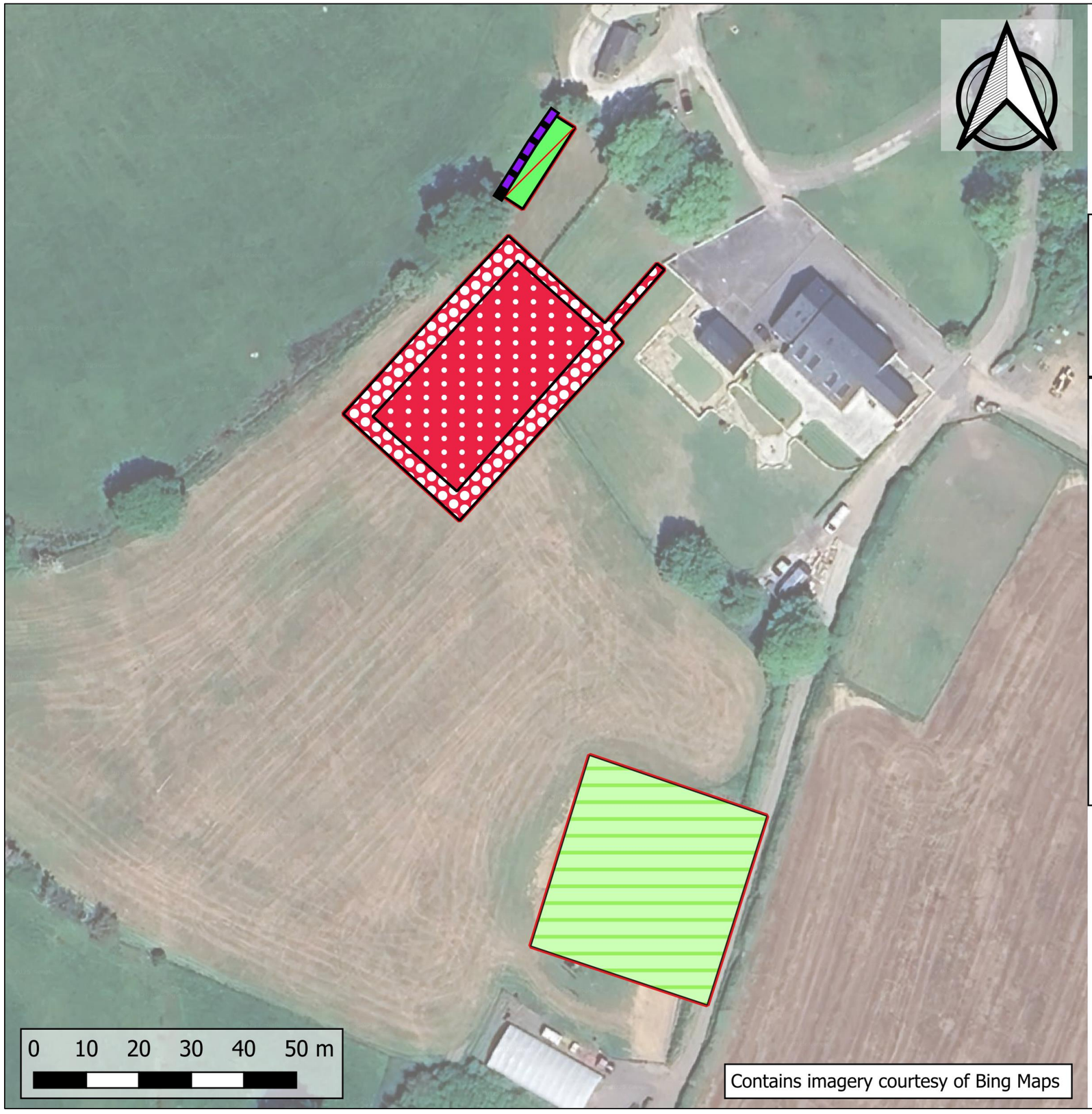
Appendix III: On-site Post-development UK Habitats Map



Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
Specialists in Protected Species

Morton House Farm - Post-Development

UK Habitats Key

- h2a6 - Other native hedgerow
- g3c - Other neutral grassland
- g4 - Modified grassland
- u1b6 - Other developed land
- u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Boundary

Survey Date:21/07/2025
Drawn: Miss. R. Brown
Date Drawn: 30/07/2025
Checked & Approved: Mrs. K. Wilding
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