

Higher Elker Farm, Billington

HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

January 2025



KNIGHT SKY ECOLOGY
PRACTICAL ECOLOGY SOLUTIONS

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction and Background

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to provide a Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for the permitted development of a stables and associated works at Higher Elker Farm, Whalley Road, Billington, BB7 9HY.

The production of a HMMP is required to discharge planning condition 6 of the planning permission notice (Ribble Valley Borough Council - planning ref. 3/2024/0839).

1.2 Existing Documents

This HMMP seeks to address the requirements of condition 5 and has been informed by the following documents which were submitted to the application to set out the Biodiversity Net Gain commitments made for the site post-development:

- Knight Sky Ecology (2024). Technical Note: Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (October 2024)
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.
- Habitat Condition Assessment for modified grassland.
- UK Habitat Classification baseline (Figure 1) and post-development figures (Figure 2).

A biodiversity gain plan is to be submitted separately.

2 ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

2.1 Habitats

Table 2.1 provides a list of all the habitats that are to be lost or retained along with the selected habitats which are to be created. There are no habitats subject to enhancement. The created habitats that are of primary consideration for maintenance / management are highlighted in green and extend to trees only.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the baseline habitats and Figure 2 provides an overview of the locations of each habitat parcel post-development.

Table 2.1. Habitats within the site to be retained, created and managed

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Area retained	Biodiversity Commitments
BASELINE				
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.02172	0.00821	No management commitments required provided that the habitat is retained in perpetuity as stated.
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.0473	0.0473	N/A - No management commitments required
CREATED HABITATS				
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.0135	NA	N/A - No management commitments required
Individual trees	Urban/rural tree	0.0122	NA	3 trees to be planted

2.2 Aims of BMP

The primary aim of this BMP is to provide a framework for the delivery of the tree establishment and management measures within the site in order to achieve the biodiversity net gain (BNG) metric calculations stated at the planning consent stage (Knight Sky Ecology, 2024). Namely, a net gain of 23.66% for habitats (total post-development value = 0.06 habitat units) is required. This net gain complies with the legislation set out within the Environment Act 2021.

In accordance with the BNG assessment, **a minimum of 3 trees are required to be planted in order to achieve the stated net gain.**

There are no other habitat enhancement, creation or management actions required for any other feature on the site provided that the development is constructed to the specifications as approved.

2.3 Tree locations

Figure 2 shows the location of the tree planting area. This area is within the same pasture field as the stables.

3 MANAGEMENT

3.1 Ecological Trends and Constraints

There are no ecological trends or constraints within the site that may influence management. The trees would not be actively managed and there are no expected ecological constraints to the management of the trees.

3.2 Management Prescriptions

3.2.1 General

The appointed landscaping contractor is to adhere to general good practice guidelines for any landscaping operations including:

- *BS 4428:1989 code of practice for general landscape operations*
- *BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape. Recommendations*

Any imported topsoil and site soils shall comply with BS 3882:2015 (British Standard Topsoil).

3.2.2 Trees

New Tree Planting (Minimum of 3 Trees)

Trees to be planted will comprise:

- *Betula pendula* (silver birch) x 1
- *Sorbus aucuparia* (referred to as rowan or mountain ash) x 1
- *Ilex aquifolium* (holly) x 1

It is recommended to plant at least one more tree to account for failure.

The trees should be sourced from a reputable stockist using British seed stock. Ornamental varieties of holly or other trees should not be used.

Whips or feathered trees can be purchased.

Tree planting to be undertaken November to March (dormant season).

Trees to be used shall be root balled or container grown and planted into pits of an appropriate size to accommodate the root system without restriction, backfilled with a 3:1 topsoil: compost mix and shall be secured to a machine rounded stake using 1 no. tree tie with rubber spacer. Finished height of stake shall not exceed 1/3 height of staked tree above ground. A thick mulch is to be used to retain moisture and suppress weeds.

Trees to be spaced a minimum of 3m apart.

The trees within the development will be checked on a yearly basis and any dead / dying trees will be replaced.

The trees must be protected from grazing animals (via tree guards or fencing).

3.3 Habitat Condition Requirements & Targets

Trees

As per Table 3.1, in order to meet the stated moderate target condition, the trees would need to **pass 3-4 of the 5 specified criteria.**

Table 3.1. Criteria for target conditions

Condition Required	Condition Assessment Criteria	
Individual Trees		
Moderate	A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).
	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).
	C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)
	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.
	E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.
	F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

3.4 Tree Establishment Programme

Table 3.2 provides a timetable for the habitat enhancement, creation and management actions for the site during Years 1 to 5.

Table 3.2. Timetable for annual management requirements

Habitat	Enhancement or creation	Management Action	Year	Timings	Management Requirements	Time to Target Condition
Trees	All planted trees	Tree planting	1	November – March	See Section 3.2	27 yrs
		Replacement planting (if required)	2-5	November – March as required	See Section 3.2	
		None	5-30	NA	None. Trees retained in perpetuity.	NA

4 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Funding Mechanism & Responsibilities

Mr & Mrs Whittaker (the site owners) are responsible for the delivery of all BNG requirements detailed within this document and for complying with the biodiversity related planning condition detailed within the consent notice. **The trees will be secured and maintained for at least 30 years in line with legislation.**

The site owners will appoint a landscaping contractor who will follow the stated habitat establishment and management measures within this document. This will include the implementation of remedial actions should the habitats not meet the required conditions.

Due to the habitat types (trees only), it is not envisaged that habitat management actions are required for the habitats after the 5-year establishment period. The trees should not require any works (unless dead or diseased).

4.2 Remedial Actions

Any trees which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die or are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size or species as approved.

5 MONITORING & REPORTING

5.1 Biodiversity Monitoring

With respect to the very limited habitat creation measures (i.e., planting of 3 trees only), it is not considered proportionate for the development to undertake detailed monitoring. The most important commitment is the implementation and establishment of the trees.

Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when the:

- HMMP has been implemented; and
- habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP have been completed.

The recommended approach is for the land owner (and person responsible for the delivery and management of the trees) to send the above notice and include photos of the trees and any evidence to show implementation of the correct specifications (e.g., tree labels or a purchase receipt).




Provided that any failed trees are replaced accordingly (as per the Management prescriptions) there should be no risk to the biodiversity measures in the long term.

APPENDIX A. FIGURES

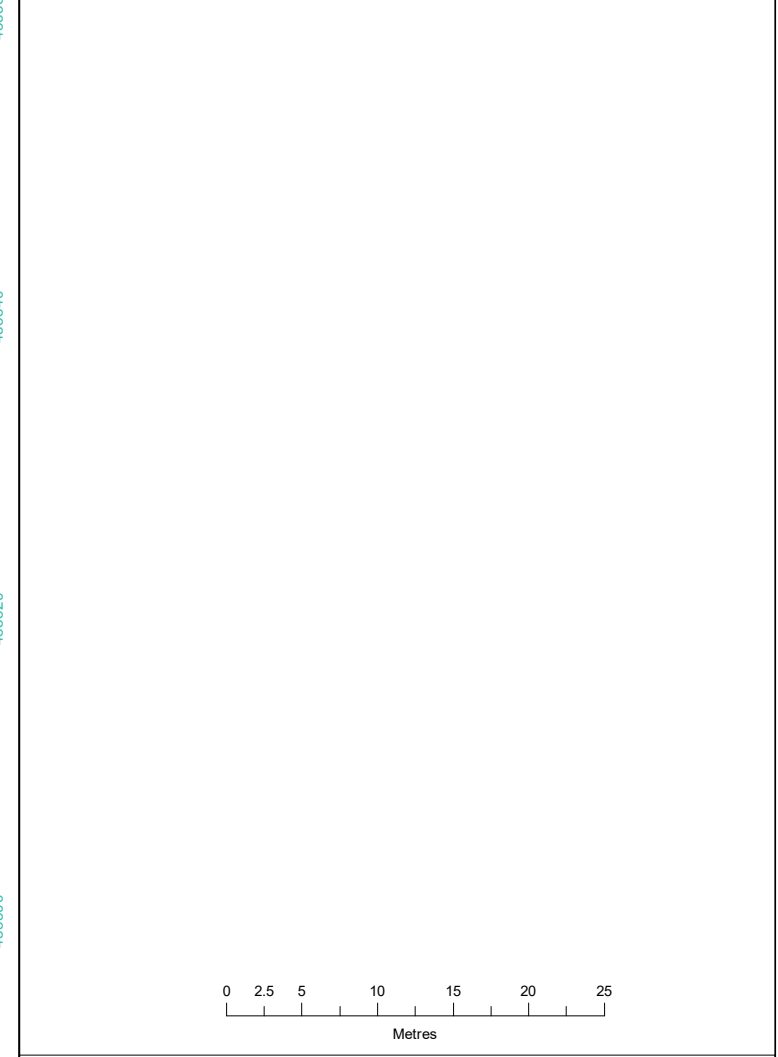
Figure 1. UK Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)

Figure 2. UK Habitat Classification Map (Post-development)



Survey Information	
	Site boundary (690.3m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g4 - Modified grassland (217.2m ²)
	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (473.1m ²)

Secondary Codes:
108 - Frequently mown



PROJECT TITLE
HIGHER ELKER FARM, BILLINGTON






DRAWING TITLE
Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)

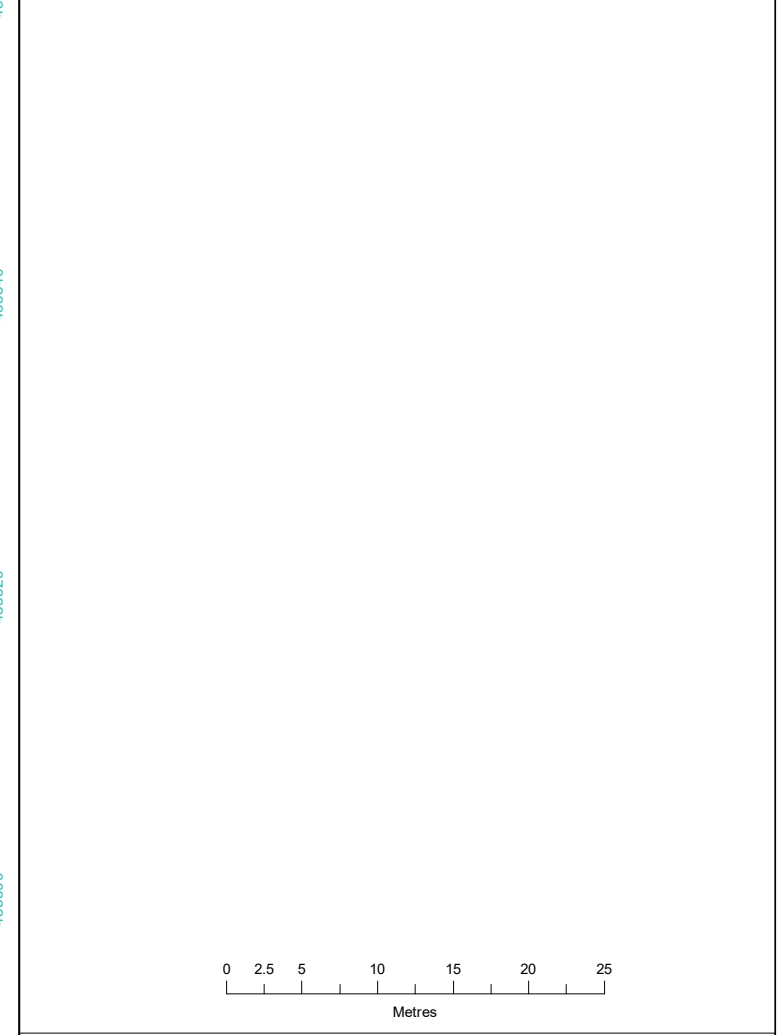
VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.0	02/10/24	UKHab	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:
KSEcology/HigherElker/UKHab

SCALE	1:500	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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Survey Information	
	Site boundary (690.3m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g4 - Modified grassland (82.1m ²)
	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (550.7m ²)
	u1b5 - Building (57.5m ²)
	32 - Scattered tree, indicative locations only (3)



PROJECT TITLE
HIGHER ELKER FARM, BILLINGTON

DRAWING TITLE
Figure 2: UK Habitat Classification Map (Post-Development)

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.1	03/10/24	Post-Development	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:
KSEcology/HigherElker/Post-Development

SCALE	1:500	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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