



TECHNICAL NOTE: BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG) STATEMENT

SITE NAME & ADDRESS	Holmes Farm, Higher Commons Lane, Balderstone, BB2 7LR
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	Conversion of barn, construction of new access and other ancillary works including demolition of outbuildings
PLANNING REFERENCE	Not yet registered
DATE	17 July 2025
AUTHOR	Ryan Knight BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist

INTRODUCTION

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to provide a BNG assessment for the proposed development at Holmes Farm. The BNG assessment includes the submission of the following documents:

- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (hereafter referred to as ‘the metric tool’)
- Habitat condition assessment
- UK Habitat Classification map – Baseline (Figure 1)
- UK Habitat Classification map – Post-development (Figure 2)

A bat survey and general ecology report has also been completed and will be submitted separately.

In England, the primary legislation for the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain (BNG) is principally set out under Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This legislation was inserted into the 1990 Act by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, and was amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Under the statutory framework for BNG, subject to some exceptions, every planning permission is subject to a condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met (“the biodiversity gain condition”). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat. This increase can be achieved through on-site biodiversity gains, registered off-site biodiversity gains or through statutory biodiversity credits.

This document has been produced to provide an overview of the BNG assessment and to provide a clear approach to how the BNG condition can be met.

METHODS

The latest version of the metric tool and User Guide (3 July 2025) have been accessed from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

A proposed layout plan for the scheme has been provided for the BNG assessment. However, such plans do not include finer details of post-development landscaping including exact tree numbers and species, grassland types and management requirements. Knight Sky Ecology does not design landscape plans. Therefore, the post-development habitat plan (Figure 2) is based on an estimate only



and reasonable assumptions have been made on the post-development habitat types that can be created and managed.

Habitat Assessment

A site walkover was undertaken on 20th May 2025 by Ryan Knight MCIEEM (Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management). All habitats within the site were described and mapped using UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2 definitions (UKHab Ltd, 2023).

BASELINE VALUES

Habitat Degradation

Within Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, which sets out the biodiversity gain condition for development, measures are included that allow planning authorities to recognise any habitat degradation since 30th January 2020 and to take the earlier habitat state as the baseline for the purposes of BNG.

The gardens of the farmhouse were previously bound by conifer (*Leylandii*) hedges which became outgrown and were removed by the occupants of the farmhouse prior to the site visit. Two individual conifer trees adjacent to the hedgerows were also removed. Figure 1.1 provides an aerial image of the trees (Google Earth) and Figure 1.2 provides a screenshot (Google Streetview).

Figure 1.1. Aerial image showing hedgerows and trees

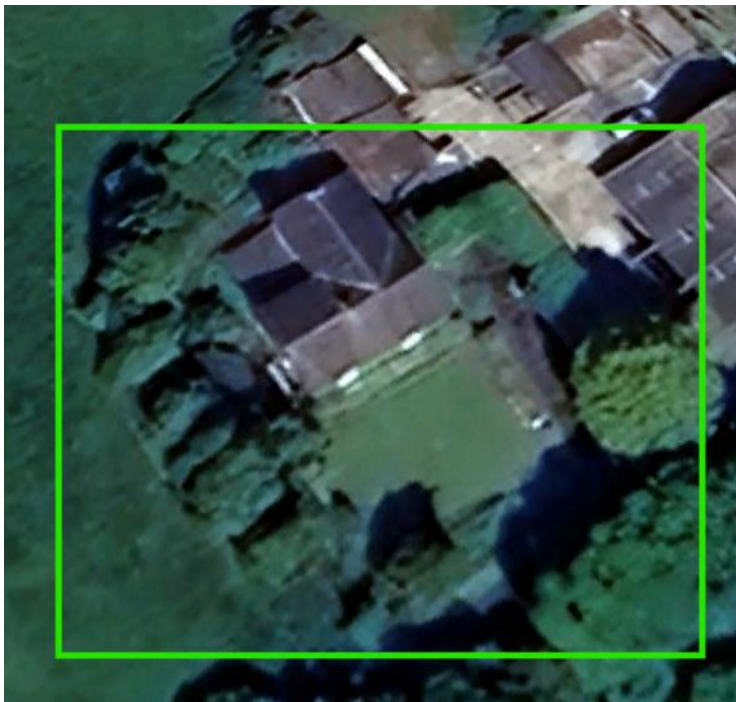




Figure 1.2 Image of hedgerow and conifer tree (Feb 2023)



In the interest of clarity, the BNG assessment has been completed retrospectively to include the garden hedgerows and trees and is considered to be a fair and accurate representation.

Habitats & Hedgerows

Photos are provided in Appendix A for context and Figure 1 in Appendix B provides an overview of the habitat baseline.

g4 Modified grassland

The development area includes two sections of the adjacent pasture field. One section is to be used for the purposes of achieving net gain and the other section comprises a small area of land adjacent to the existing field access gate which is to be used for development. The field contained a rye grass ley with a low number of typical forbs associated with such conditions. Both areas were in poor condition.

Other habitats

The other habitats within the site comprised vegetated garden, hardstanding, buildings and two trees (assessed retrospectively).

h2b Non-native hedgerows

As described above, the garden of the farmhouse did contain non-native, ornamental hedgerows.

The combined biodiversity value of the habitats was estimated to be **0.44 habitat units**. The combined value of the hedgerows was **0.06 hedgerow units**. The development will result in some loss of modified grassland, gardens, conifer hedgerows and two conifer trees.

POST DEVELOPMENT VALUES (HABITAT CREATION)

The proposed development includes the creation of small gardens within the layout. In order to offset the initial biodiversity loss and to achieve a minimum of 10% net gain for both habitats and hedgerows, a section of field measuring 500m² has been set aside for habitat creation. As it stands, the development will achieve net gain for habitats if a total of **21 native trees are planted**.

There are also several other means to which net gain will be achieved such as enhancing the existing grassland; creating species rich grassland; or planting mixed scrub.



The planting area can be bound by a planted native hedgerow (single native species or preferably, several species).

With this planting, the post-development values are **0.49 habitat units** and **0.16 hedgerow units**.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The metric tool has calculated that the development proposals result in:

- A net gain in biodiversity value for habitats of 0.04 units (10%).
- A net gain in biodiversity value for hedgerows of 0.10 units (175.46%)

The development will therefore meet the biodiversity net gain condition for habitats as the 10% net gain would be achieved. The time to target condition of the trees is 27 years (hedgerows 5 years).

The information contained within this document and the metric tool demonstrates that the mandatory BNG condition is more than capable of being discharged successfully at the site.

POST-CONSENT REQUIREMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain requires a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) to be submitted and approved by the planning authority to discharge the biodiversity gain condition prior to the commencement of development. The BGP should detail the measures undertaken to achieve the required 10% net gain as stated in the metric tool. Each local authority has differing definitions of what constitutes 'significant' or 'non-significant' on-site enhancements for BNG as this classification will define the legal mechanisms to which the stated net gain will be secured and managed. The local authority are likely to request a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and the finer details of landscaping / planting.



APPENDIX A: PHOTOS

Photos 1a & 1b.
Front and side
gardens.





Photo 2.

Grassland field proposed for habitat creation.



Photo 3.

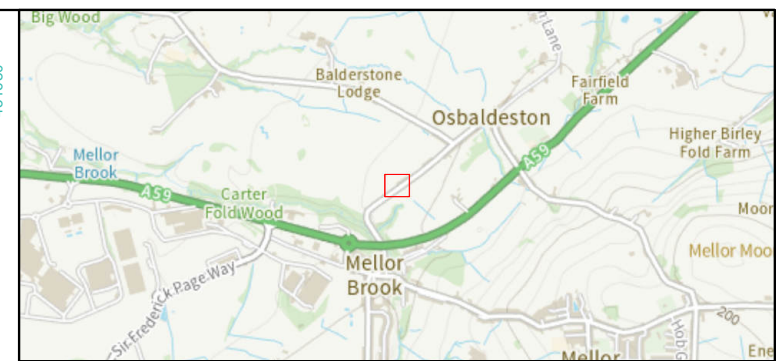
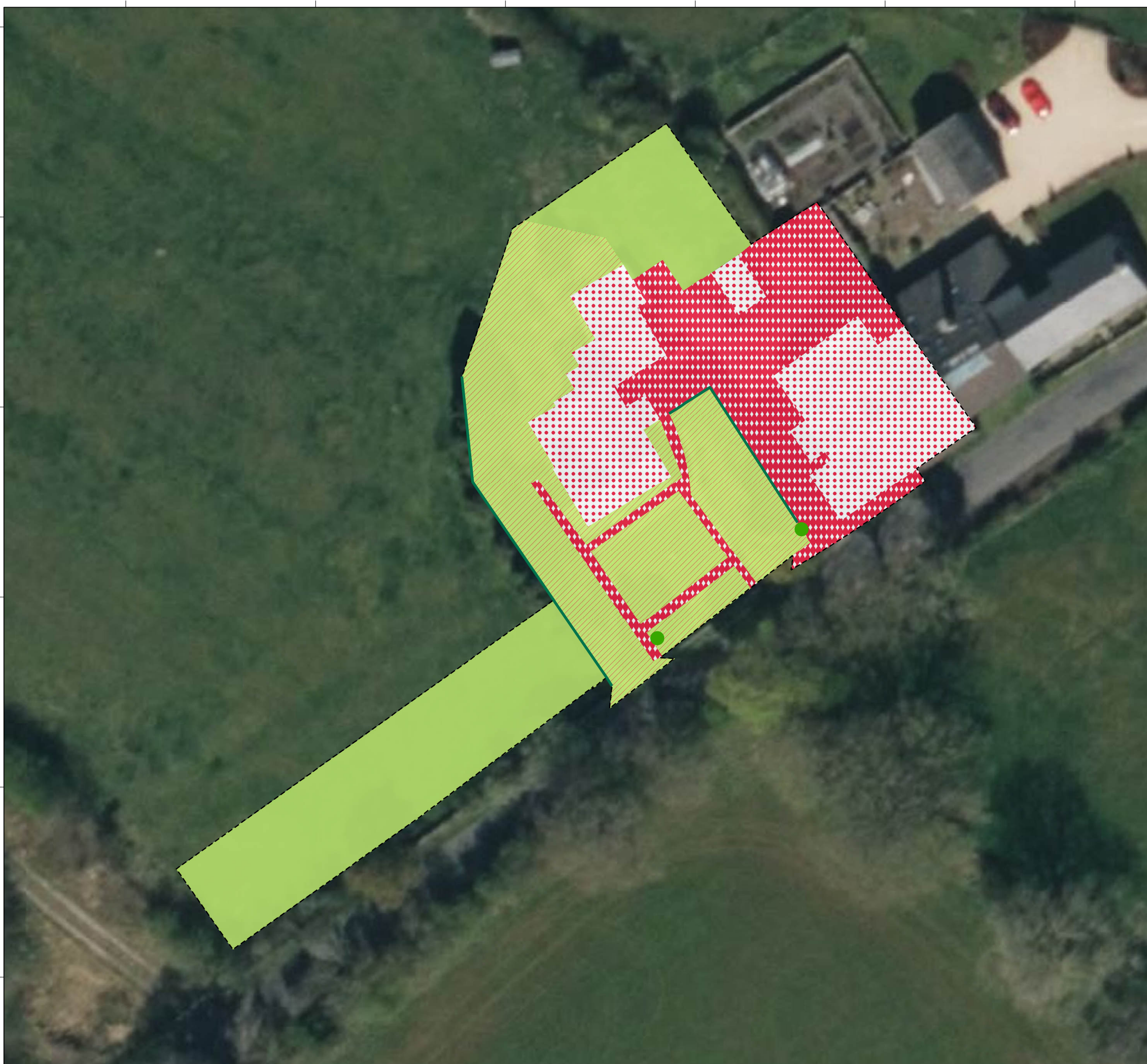
g4 modified grassland in front of field entrance.

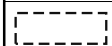








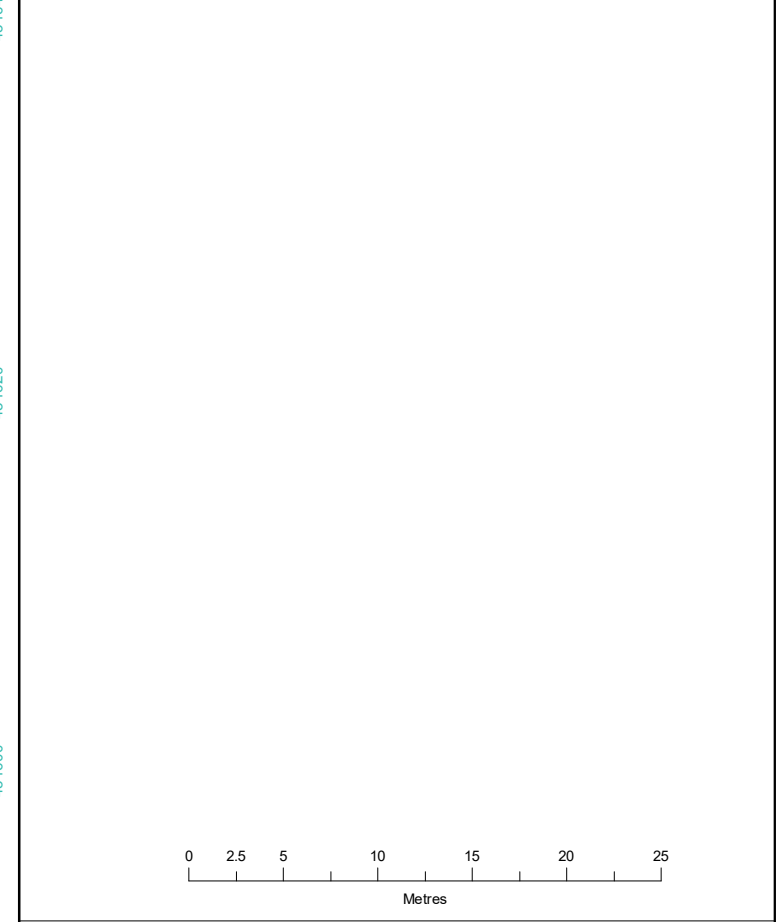


APPENDIX B: FIGURES (NEXT PAGE)

- **FIGURE 1. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (BASELINE)**
- **FIGURE 2. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (POST-DEVELOPMENT)**



Survey Information	
	Site boundary (2,377.1m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g4 - Modified grassland (695.1m ²)
	u1b5 - Building (484.6m ²)
	u1b6 - Other developed land (491.8m ²)
	828 - Vegetated garden (705.6m ²)
	h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (59.3m)
	32 - Scattered tree (2)



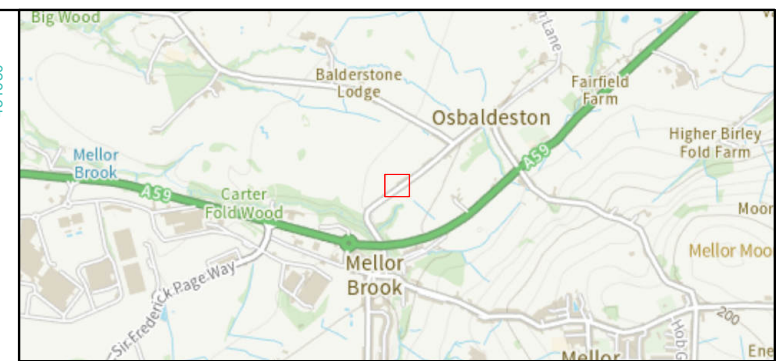
PROJECT TITLE
HOLMES FARM, BALDERSTONE

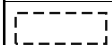






DRAWING TITLE
Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)

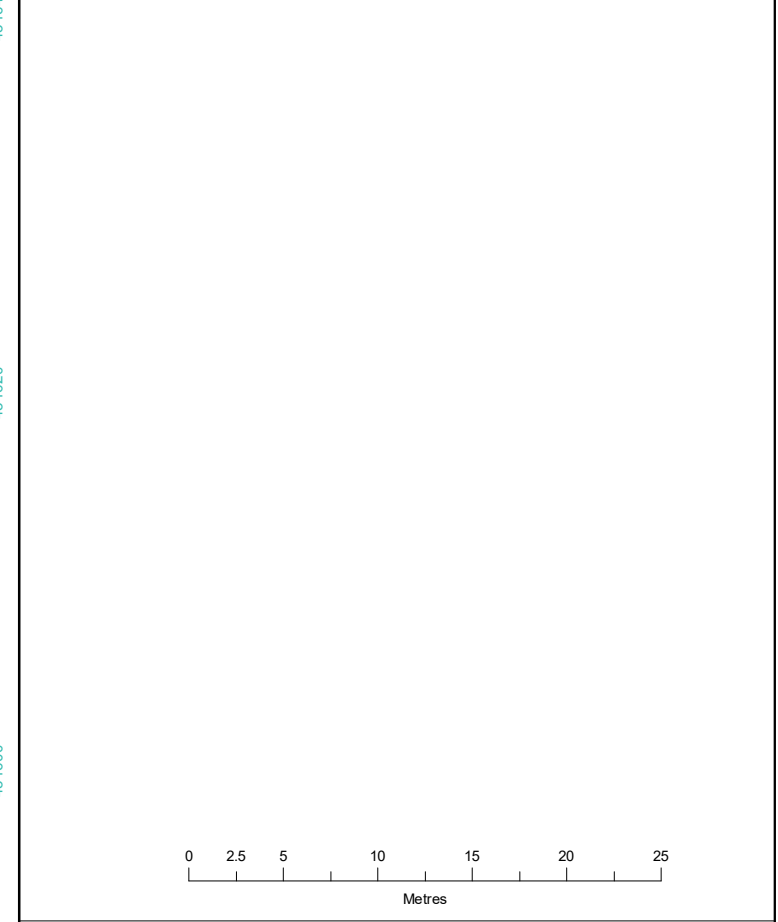
VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.0	17/07/25	UKHab	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:
KSEcology/HolmesFarmBalderstone/UKHab

SCALE	1:400	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
-------	-------	-----------	----	-------	------	------------	-----



Survey Information	
	Site boundary (2,377.1m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g4 - Modified grassland (500.0m ²)
	u1b5 - Building (536.4m ²)
	u1b6 - Other developed land (821.8m ²)
	828 - Vegetated garden (518.9m ²)
	h2a - Native hedgerow (48.8m)
	32 - Scattered tree, newly planted



PROJECT TITLE
HOLMES FARM, BALDERSTONE

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

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.0	17/07/25	Post-Development	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:
KSEcology/HolmesFarmBalderstone/Post-Development

SCALE	1:400	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
-------	-------	-----------	----	-------	------	------------	-----

Source:
Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright
2025. All rights reserved.
Licence Number 100049837.

