



**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

**BRIDGECROFT, LONGSIGHT ROAD, BLACKBURN, BB1 9EX**

**AUGUST 2025**

# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**BRIDGECROFT, LONGSIGHT ROAD, BLACKBURN, BB1 9EX,**

*A report for*

**Clayton Hill Properties Ltd**  
Oaklea,  
Longsight Road  
Clayton-Le-Dale  
Blackburn, BB1 9EX

*Report by*



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 REASON FOR SURVEY

PENNINE ecological have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Bridgecroft, Longsight Road, Blackburn, BB19EX.

The assessment is required for a planning application to replace the existing residential property with a new dwelling including the demolition of the existing buildings on the site. The works would likely require the removal of some vegetation on the site. Detailed plans for the proposals are not provided at this stage.

A biodiversity survey and report has been completed to provide a baseline of the site conditions and to determine whether the proposals would result in significant impacts to protected habitats or species.

This report addresses potential ecological impacts which may arise from the proposals. This includes;

- Habitat assessment (UKHabs survey).
- Badger survey.
- Potential breeding bird issues associated with the site.
- Bat Roost Assessment
- Reptile assessment

## 1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is situated within a rural area of Copster Green, north of Blackburn. The surrounding landscape comprises, agricultural land and residential dwellings. The sites central National Grid Reference is SD 6715 3363. An aerial image of the area subject to survey is shown below.

**Figure 1.1: Aerial image of land at Longsight Road, with red line survey area**



## **2. METHODOLOGY**

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### **2.1 DESK SURVEY**

A desk-based data search using freely available information was undertaken.

The Multi Agency Geographical Information Centre [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk) was also referred to in respect of statutory sites, GCN licence returns, and European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) issued in respect of GCN and bats.

A review of the Ribble Valley Borough Council planning portal was undertaken in relation to historic planning applications within the vicinity of the site.

In addition, Pennine Ecological's dataset was referenced which contains extensive records of species and habitats generated from surveys undertaken since the company's formation in 1996.

It should be noted that species records over 500m of the site are not reproduced here as they are considered to have no association with the site and are beyond the sphere of influence for this proposal.

### **2.2 HABITAT SURVEY**

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) survey (UKHab Ltd, 2020) of the habitats within the red line boundary was undertaken on 18/07/2025. The site's habitats were mapped, and vascular plant species were recorded and given a DAFOR ((Dominant (D), Abundant (A), Frequent (F), Occasional (O), Rare (R)) score. Each habitat was given a distinctiveness and habitat condition score (Natural England, 2023). Secondary codes have been applied where required to describe the primary habitats. Habitats have been mapped using the fine-scale minimum mapping unit.

### **2.3 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS**

#### **2.3.1 Badger Survey**

A badger survey was undertaken of the site and up to 50m from the site boundary (where access permitted) and followed standard survey guidance (Harris et al., 1989, and Roper, 2010). The badger survey used standard techniques for establishing the use of the site by badger, and includes searches for evidence of badgers including:

- Setts.
- Pathways.
- Footprints.
- Latrines.
- Foraging areas.
- Scratching posts.
- Boundary searches for runs, pathways, and latrines.

#### **2.3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment**

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken on the 18/07/2025 following the methodology outlined in Bat Conservation Trust: Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines (2023). All trees on site were assessed from ground level and using close focusing binoculars where required.

### **2.3.3 Breeding Bird Assessment**

The site was assessed for its potential to support breeding birds. This included identifying any evidence of historic nesting within the site.

Any bird activity within the site was recorded whilst undertaking the site survey.

### **2.3.4 Great Crested Newt Assessment**

The site was evaluated by means of desk study and the surveyor's specialist knowledge of the species, in particular its terrestrial habits and breeding requirements. In addition, ponds within 250m of the site were subject to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment.

The index applies ten suitability indices which are multiplied together to produce a score for each pond (Oldham et al, 2000). Based on the score a pond suitability for supporting GCN is applied to each pond (see Table 2.1 below).

Note: The HSI system is not sufficiently precise to conclude that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not support newts.

**Table 2.1: HSI scoring**

HSI Score	Pond Suitability
< 0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below Average
0.6 – 0.69	Average
0.7 – 0.79	Good
> 0.8	Excellent

### **2.3.5 Reptile Assessment**

A habitat suitability assessment for reptile species was undertaken for the site. The survey was undertaken in accordance with the Reptile Habitat Guide - National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme, (The Herpetological Trust, 2007).

The survey included a search for suitable reptile habitats which can include; dune landscapes, rough grassland, woodland, and scrub fringes.

### **2.3.6 Other Protected and Notable Species**

Consideration was given to other protected and notable species potentially present. The following species / species groups have been scoped out for further assessment, with brief reasoning provided below:

- Riparian Mammals – There are no watercourses or waterbodies within 100m of the site. The site comprises habitats that are of no value to riparian mammals. Due to the lack of connectivity to any watercourses or waterbodies, riparian mammals are considered to be absent from the site and locally.
- Invertebrates – There are no notable invertebrate records within 500m of the site. The site is highly unlikely to support notable invertebrate assemblages.

These species are not discussed further within this report.

## **2.4 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS**

The site survey was conducted on 18/07/2025. Full access to the site and surrounding area was possible. The habitats on site were accurately identified and condition assessed.

There are considered to be no limitations to the evaluations and recommendations provided within this report.

## **2.5 SURVEYOR EXPERIENCE**

The surveyor and author of this report, Marcus Hogg, is a qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (QCIEEM) and has over five years' experience in ecological survey and evaluation. Key skills include the following.

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey/UKHabs Survey.
- Proficient field botanist.
- Breeding bird survey.
- Mammal surveys including surveys for badger and preliminary bat roost survey. Natural England Bat Class License: 2022-10305-CL17-BAT.
- Extensive experience in great crested newt (GCN) surveying. Natural England Class Licence: 2022-10622-CL08-GCN.
- Ground-level and aerial tree assessments.

## 3. RESULTS

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### 3.1 DESK STUDY

#### 3.1.1 Statutory Sites

The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of Red Scar and Tun Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is approximately 7.7km west of the site. Red Scar and Tun SSSI includes Boilton woods and Nab woods and is one of the largest areas of deciduous woodland in Lancashire.

The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones<sup>1</sup> (IRZ's) has been reviewed with the following determination:

“The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin. Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin.”

#### 3.1.2 Non-Statutory Sites

There are no known non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the site.

#### 3.1.3 Protected / Notable Habitats and Species

Two European Protected Species License records for bats were identified within 1km of the site. The closest is approximately 300m northeast of the site and is for the destruction of a breeding roost for common pipistrelle active between 2018-2029. The second was for the destruction of a place of rest for Natterers bats approximately 700m northeast of the site active between 2021-2026.

A search for GCN survey results found a 2018 survey of a pond approximately 950m southwest of the site where GCN were determined to be absent.

### 3.2 HABITAT SURVEY

#### 3.2.1 Habitats Present

- u1b5 Buildings
- w1g (10) Other broadleaved woodland (*scattered scrub*)
- h2a Native hedgerow
- g4 Modified grassland

#### 3.2.2 General Description

The site comprises a vacant bungalow in a state of disrepair situated within a plot which has become overgrown with vegetation. A combination of native semi-mature trees, ornamental species and fruiting trees from what was likely once an orchard now comprise a semi-natural woodland encompassing the house. A native hedgerow defines the southern boundary of the site.

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<sup>1</sup> The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites

### 3.2.3 Habitat Descriptions

#### (i) u1b5 Buildings

There are two buildings on the site, a single-dwelling bungalow (B1) and a outbuilding/garage in the east of the site (B2). See 3.3.2 for full descriptions.

#### (ii) w1g Other broadleaved woodland (*scattered scrub*)

The habitat comprises early successional scrub and secondary woodland, with a herb-rich understorey indicative of mesotrophic to slightly damp conditions. The developing canopy comprises frequent Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), with occasional Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), and Weeping Willow (*Salix × sepulcralis*).

The understorey and ground flora are well-developed and characterised by frequent Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), and Goat Willow regeneration. Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and Persian Ivy (*Hedera colchica*) are also frequent. Occasional species include Cleaver's (*Galium aparine*), Large Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctata*), and Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), with Lords-and-ladies (*Arum maculatum*) recorded rarely.

#### (iii) g4 Modified grassland

The sward comprises abundant Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), forming a patchy but continuous cover across the site. Broadleaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Himalayan Balsam and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense* agg.) are all frequent throughout, reflecting the moist and nutrient-rich conditions.

#### (iv) h2a Native hedgerow

Defining the southern boundary of the site is a native species-poor hedgerow dominated by hawthorn with occasional ash and elder. Ground flora includes frequent common nettle, false-oat grass and occasional broad-leaved dock.

## 3.3 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS

### 3.3.1 Badger Survey

#### (i) Setts

The survey found no setts on site or within 50m of the site.

#### (i) Foraging Signs and Pathways

No sign of badger activity was found on site or within 50m of the site.

#### (ii) Boundary Search

All of the boundaries of the site were walked and examined for potential runs, pathways, and latrines. The search found no evidence to suggest badger activity along any of the site boundaries.

The absence of any activity signs indicates that badgers are not entering the site. The absence of latrines indicates a lack of territorial activity in the vicinity of the site.

### **3.3.2 Bat Assessment**

#### **(i) Preliminary Roost Assessment**

B1 is a mid-20th century detached bungalow with a low-pitched hipped roof with clay tiles. The exterior is finished in pebbledash render. The property includes canted bay windows on the front and side elevations with modern uPVC units.

The building is in moderate overall condition with some signs of damage and decay. Exterior walls were in good condition with no missing render, cracks or holes which could be used by roosting bats. A hole approximately 8cm x 5cm on the soffit box (PRF1) on the southern aspect of the building may provide access to a space that could be used by moderate numbers of roosting bats. In addition, missing clay tiles (PRF2) on the southern aspect of B1's roof could be used by small numbers of crevice-dwelling bats. No signs of bats were identified on the exterior of the building.

Internally the majority of the loft space of B1 is vaulted with a plastered finish with a small section on the west side of the house with exposed roof lining. No signs of bats were identified during the internal inspections.

**B1** was assessed as having **Moderate** potential for roosting bats.

B2 is a small single-storey garage in the east of the site. The building is constructed of brick with a pebbledash rendered finish with a pitched roof with clay tiles. The building is in poor condition with missing and broken fascia boards. Much of the building is dominated by ivy. There are large gaps between the tiles and roof lining around the entire circumference of the roof which could be used by bats to access the building. The roof structure likely provides numerous crevices which could be used by roosting bats. Internally the roof lining was found to be in poor condition with multiple holes which could allow access to the building. The wooden structure of the roof may provide internal potential roosting features for bats. Although B2 has numerous PRF features on all aspects, internally and externally, the building is cluttered by dense understory vegetation which could impede access for bats.

**B2** was assessed as having **Moderate** potential for roosting bats.

All trees and shrubs on the site were assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats due to a lack of potential roost features.

#### **(ii) Bat Habitat Suitability**

The majority of the site is dominated by secondary woodland which likely provides optimal foraging for bats, particularly on its edges where it meets other natural habitats such as the grassland to the north. In addition, Park Brook and its associated habitats to the north of the site and a parcel of woodland to the northeast of the site will likely offer optimal foraging and roosting opportunities for bats. The site has functional connectivity to these features via a line of trees which may be used as a commuting corridor for bats.

### **3.3.3 Bird Assessment**

No bird's nests were identified on the site.

Bullfinch, blue tit, great tit and gold finch were recorded during the field survey.

The woodland on the site offers optimal nesting opportunities for birds. The native hedgerow may also be of value, however, it is subject to a high level of disturbance from the busy road which runs parallel to the hedgerow.

Habitat associated with the site is considered to be of 'High' suitability for breeding birds.

### **3.3.4 Great Crested Newts**

#### **(i) Pond Scoping**

There are no ponds within 250m of the site.

Due to the absence of suitable breeding ponds in the vicinity of the site presence of great crested newt can be reasonably discounted from the site.

### **3.3.5 Reptile Assessment**

The woodland edge, scattered scrub and grassland in the north of the site may provide shelter, basking and foraging opportunities for reptiles. No suitable refugia or hibernacula were identified during the survey, however, it's possible that deadwood or waste/debris could be concealed within areas of dense vegetation.

Reptile distribution in the region is known to sparse and highly localised. It is considered unlikely that the site could support significant populations of reptiles, however, their presence on site cannot be discounted.

## 4. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 4.1 DESK STUDY

#### 4.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods SSSI which is approximately 7.7km west of the site.

The SSSI Impact Risk Zones have been reviewed with the following determination:

“The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin. Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin”.

Due to the limited scope of the works and the distance of the site to the SSSI no impact is associated on the designated site.

#### (i) Recommendations: Statutory Designated Sites

Consultation with Natural England is not required with respect to the potential impacts on Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods SSSI.

#### 4.1.2 Non-statutory Designated Sites

No non-statutory designated sites were identified with 1km of the site.

#### (i) Recommendations: Non-statutory Designated Sites

No impacts on non-designated sites are anticipated as a result of the works.

### 4.2 HABITATS

The existing habitats on site are of low to medium distinctiveness.

Due to the size and current condition of the habitats on site, the value of the current sites habitats cannot exceed 'site' ecological value, with impacts not extending beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

The development will need to ensure appropriate compensation for the loss of habitats.

#### (i) Recommendations: Habitats

If applicable a biodiversity net gain (BNG) metric calculation will be undertaken, which will provide a baseline habitat value and indicate how the proposal will achieve a measurable 10% net gain, in accordance with national and local planning policy.

### 4.3 BADGERS

No evidence of badger activity was found within the site or the wider area during the survey, however, badger may be active in the wider landscape.

#### (i) Recommendations: Badgers

No requirement for further survey.

If mammal burrows are discovered during clearance of the site or during the construction phase, a suitably trained ecologist should be contacted for advice.

#### **4.4 BATS**

Bats are comprehensively protected under European legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

B1 and B2 were assessed as having **Moderate** potential for roosting bats.

The habitats associated with the site and surrounding area provide suitable foraging opportunities for bats.

The habitat value of the site for bats cannot exceed 'site' ecological value, with impacts not extending beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

##### **(i) Recommendations: Bats**

Two dusk emergence surveys must be undertaken between May-September to determine presence or likely absence of bats using B1 or B2. One surveyor is required to cover the southern aspect of B1 where there are potential roost features. Two surveyors are required to cover all features on B2. If bats are found then the level/type of activity identified will guide the mitigation required to inform a Natural England licence application

No further assessment / mitigation in respect of bats can be provided at this stage until the status of bats in the building is known.

#### **4.5 BIRDS**

All breeding birds (with only minor exceptions) are offered various levels of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

Nesting provisions are provided by the woodland and hedgerow on the site.

The site is not capable of supporting a bird assemblage above 'site' ecological value.

##### **(i) Recommendations: Birds**

Before any development and in order to minimize impacts on birds any site disturbance including the demolition of the buildings on the site and any removal of vegetation should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e. between September 1st and February 28th. Following the felling of trees/scrub/shrubs, piles of brash should be removed from the site, failure to do so could provide potential nest sites if left in situ until the following breeding season.

If demolition and/or vegetation removal of the above features is anticipated during the breeding season (March 1st to August 31st), then checks should be made to establish any nesting or breeding activity, prior to removal.

Additional bird nesting provisions should be included upon the new buildings. These enhancement measures would contribute to achieving an overall biodiversity net gain for this proposal.

Bird nesting provisions could include:

- Standard bird nest boxes which could support common garden and farmland bird species (e.g. 1B Schwegler nest box).

#### **4.6 REPTILES**

Reptiles are offered various levels of protection under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

The site offers some suitable habitats for reptiles, however, the sparse distribution of reptile populations in the region and the size of the suitable habitats on the site, it is considered unlikely that the site would support any significant populations of reptiles.

**(i) Recommendations: Reptiles**

No further surveys for reptiles are required.

In the unlikely event that a reptile is encountered on the site the individual should be allowed disperse to a safe area. If multiple reptiles are discovered, works should cease and a suitably trained ecologist contacted for advice.

**4.7 INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

Himalayan balsam is scattered throughout the site within the woodland and grassland. Himalayan balsam is listed under Schedule 9 of the WCA (see Appendix 1a). This makes it an offence to plant or otherwise cause the spread of the plant in the wild.

The following measures should be implemented to control and/or eradicate Himalayan balsam from the site:

- Himalayan balsam removal should be undertaken between April and June, prior to seeding.
- Pull the plant up by grasping the base of the stem and giving a steady gentle pull to bring up roots.
- Dispose of Himalayan balsam in line with appropriate controlled waste measures or by leaving it in a pile to compost down (this stops the balsam re-growing from the roots or the nodules on the stem).
- Ensure biosecurity measures are in place and clean boots, clothing and vehicle tyres before leaving site.

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## Appendix A: Site Photographs

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**Photograph 1: Southern aspect of B1.**



**Photograph 4: B1 – PRF1: Hole in soffit box.**



**Photograph 2: Western aspect of B1.**



**Photograph 5: B1 – PRF2: Missing roof tiles.**



**Photograph 3: Northern aspect of B1.**



**Photograph 6: B1, vaulted loft space with plastered finish.**



**Photograph 7: B1 loft space over west side of building.**



**Photograph 10: Internal view of B2.**



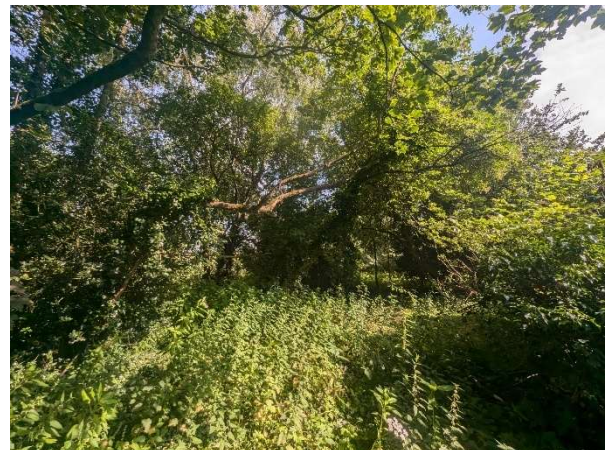
**Photograph 8: Southern aspect of B2 with missing fascia and gaps leading to roof structure.**



**Photograph 11: Other broadleaved woodland.**



**Photograph 9: Northern aspect of B2 with broken fascia and gaps under tiles.**



**Photograph 12: Other broadleaved woodland.**



**Photograph 13: Native hedgerow defining southern border of the site.**



**Photograph 14: Modified grassland in the north of the site.**



**Photograph 15: Himalayan balsam.**

## Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1 – UKHabs Baseline Map



# Appendix C: Condition Assessment Sheets

## Grassland Low Distinctiveness Condition Assessment Sheet

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m <sup>2</sup> present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). <b>Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.</b>  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 <sup>2</sup> (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.	No	
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.	Yes	
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.	Yes	
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.	Yes	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) <sup>2</sup> .	Yes	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	No	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species <sup>3</sup> (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA <sup>4</sup> ).	No	Himalayan balsam
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			No
Number of criteria passed			4
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)		

# Woodland Condition Assessment Sheet

Condition Assessment Criteria						
Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator	Notes (such as justification)	
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes <sup>1</sup> present.	Two age-classes <sup>1</sup> present.	One age-class <sup>1</sup> present.	2	
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland <sup>2</sup> .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland <sup>2</sup> .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland <sup>2</sup> .	3	
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species <sup>3</sup> present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, and other invasive species <sup>3</sup> <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species <sup>3</sup> ≥10% cover.	2	
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species <sup>4</sup> found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species <sup>4</sup> found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species <sup>4</sup> across woodland parcel.	3	
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native <sup>5</sup> .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native <sup>5</sup> .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native <sup>5</sup> .	3	
F	Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space <sup>6</sup> . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted <sup>7</sup> .	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space <sup>6</sup> .	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space <sup>6</sup> . But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category <sup>7</sup> .	3	
G	Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland <sup>8</sup> ; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland <sup>8</sup> .	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland <sup>8</sup> .	3	
H	Tree health	Tree mortality 10% or less, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback <sup>9</sup> .	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present <sup>9</sup> .	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present <sup>9</sup> .	3	
I	Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community <sup>10</sup> at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community <sup>10</sup> at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community <sup>10</sup> at ground layer present.	1	
J	Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland <sup>11</sup> .	Two storeys across all survey plots <sup>11</sup> .	One or less storey across all survey plots <sup>11</sup> .	2	
K	Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees <sup>12</sup> per hectare.	One veteran tree <sup>12</sup> per hectare.	No veteran trees <sup>12</sup> present in woodland.	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 <sup>13</sup> .	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 <sup>13</sup> .	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 <sup>13</sup> .	1	
M	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident <sup>14</sup> .	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground <sup>14</sup> .	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground <sup>14</sup> .	1	
<b>Total Score (out of a possible 39)</b>				<b>28</b>		
<b>Condition Assessment Result</b>			<b>Condition Assessment Score</b>		<b>Result Achieved</b>	
Total score >32 (33 to 39)			Good (3)		Moderate	
Total score 26 to 32			Moderate (2)			
Total score <26 (13 to 25)			Poor (1)			

# Hedgerow Condition Assessment Sheet

Condition Assessment Details					
<p>A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the 'favourable condition' criteria.</p> <p>This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook<sup>1</sup> and Favourable Conservation Status document<sup>2</sup>. For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook.</p> <p>Best practice would be to record the species, age, spacing and other key information about all trees present along a hedgerow within the 'Habitat Description' box, as well as other key features of the hedgerow.</p>					
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes					
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)	Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Criteria description	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)	
<b>Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types</b>					
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is &gt;1.5 m height).</p>	Yes	
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	<p>The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees.</p> <p>Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are &gt;0.5 m in height.</p> <p>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).</p>	Yes	
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	<p>This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth.</p> <p>Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).</p>	Yes	
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	<p>This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small).</p> <p>Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the &gt;5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).</p>	Yes	
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).	<p>This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Yes	
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	<p>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.</p>	No	
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 <sup>3</sup> ) and recently introduced species.	<p>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<sup>4</sup>, as well as the BSBi website<sup>5</sup> 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<sup>6</sup>.</p>	Yes	
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	<p>This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes.</p> <p>This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).</p>	Yes	
<b>Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only</b>					
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient <sup>7</sup> ), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	<p>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.</p>	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.	<p>This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.</p>	N/A	
<p>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.</p>					
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 Does not fail both attributes 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 Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1			
<b>Score achieved:</b>		Good			