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TECHNICAL NOTE:
- ECOLOGY WALKOVER
- BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN STRATEGY

SITE NAME & ADDRESS	Ribble Valley View Lodge Park, Old Langho Rd, Old Langho, BB6 8AW
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	Proposed siting of additional holiday lodges
PLANNING REFERENCE	Not yet registered
DATE	15 April 2026

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to provide ecological consultancy services to support the proposed development on land at Ribble Valley View Lodge Park. The park is relatively new and has been subject to expansion in recent years. The proposal is to infill a margin of land located between two areas of lodges with a further nine units.

The commission comprised an ecology walker (including desk study and site-based assessment) and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment which was supported by 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)

This technical note has been produced to accompany the above listed information and provide an overview of the BNG assessment results along with a baseline of all relevant ecological information for the site.

In England, the primary legislation for the statutory framework for 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.

Since the advent of mandatory net gain, every development proposal which is not exempt from BNG requires a certain level of ecological information to feed into the metric tool and ensure compliance with both national and local policy frameworks. In response to the unprecedented demand for ecological services driven by BNG, Knight Sky Ecology has developed an appropriately scaled assessment approach tailored to minor development proposals. The level of ecological information presented in this document is considered proportionate to the scale of the project, the development

history of the site, existing site conditions and the limited complexity of potential impacts that may arise as a result of the construction of the development.

2. METHODS

The ecology data including the metric tool along with the pre and post development habitat maps have been based on the red line planning boundary provided by the agent. All land within the red line boundary is referred to as 'the site'.

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

DESK STUDY

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping tool (Available from: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/) was used to search for ecological information contained within the following datasets:

- Statutory designated sites for nature conservation (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) including SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess for likely impacts on SSSI.
- Priority habitats (as listed within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) within a 250m radius.

Geospatial datasets for Biological Heritage Sites and the Lancashire Ecological Network were accessed from here. The Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy map was accessed from Lancashire LNRS.

Basic initial information about the site and surrounding area was also obtained from Google Earth and Ordnance Survey maps in order to provide further contextualised information to the site survey findings.

SITE SURVEY

General Walkover and Habitat Survey

A site walkover was undertaken on 25th February 2026 by Ryan Knight MCIEEM (Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management).

The aim of the site visit was to gather sufficient baseline information of the habitats within the site and to identify any habitats or features of potential ecological significance. All habitats within the site were described and mapped using UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2 definitions (UKHab Ltd, 2023).

In addition, the site visit included a search for incidental evidence of protected / notable species and an assessment of the sites potential to support protected / notable species.

The site visit was undertaken outside of the habitat survey season. However, the habitats were very basic and a sufficient level of detail was obtained for the assessment.

3. RESULTS

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Nationally / Internationally Designated Sites

There are no SSSI within 2km and the Impact Risk Zones for SSSI (SSSI) indicate that the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on any terrestrial SSSI in the wider area.

Locally Designated Sites

The nearest Biological Heritage Site (BHS) comprises Great Wood and Mill Wood located 205m north. This woodland is designated for its woodland and scrub interests and for its botanical interest.

Priority & Irreplaceable Habitats

There are no priority or irreplaceable habitats (including hedgerows) on the site. The nearest priority habitat comprises deciduous woodland located 50m north.

Lancashire Ecological Network & Lancashire Nature Recovery Strategy

The holiday park and application site is within both the grassland and woodland components of the ecological network. In addition, the application site is categorised as an Area that Could Become Important (ACB). Potential nature recovery measures within the application site include:

- **Urban U2.3 - 38893:** Wooded habitat creation and enhancement in urban open spaces such as orchards, street trees, micro-woods, urban woodland and hedgerows.
- **Woodland W2.5 – 15197:** Wet woodland creation in suitable locations for example: flood plains, post-industrial habitats, willow crop in wetter farming, transitional habitats between peatland and non-peatland habitats; including natural regeneration, planting of appropriate native species and potentially re-wetting of suitable woodland sites on previously drained land.
- **Woodland: W2.1 – 5474:** Establish riparian woodland and trees along water courses, riparian corridors and floodplains, through appropriate planting or natural colonisation, where biodiversity gains and improved habitat connectivity can be achieved.
- **Woodland: W2.7 – 371:** Create appropriate semi-natural habitats to buffer, expand or connect existing woodland, incorporating natural colonisation wherever possible.

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 and to take the earlier habitat state as the baseline for the purposes of BNG.

In this case, it can be confirmed that unpermitted habitat degradation has taken place within the site. Evidence from the site visit, supported by a review of Google Earth historical imagery, shows that several trees were felled between late 2025 and early 2026 (see Figure 3.1). The stumps remain in situ (see Plates), providing clear physical evidence of removal.

Although at least one or two of the felled trees were in poor physiological condition, including a large sycamore that was entirely hollow with no remaining heartwood, the Biodiversity Metric does not discount trees on the basis of arboricultural condition. In accordance with Schedule 14 and the BNG guidance, all trees present prior to degradation must be included in the baseline, irrespective of structural defects, decay, or reduced arboricultural value.

Within the Biodiversity Metric, the biodiversity value of individual trees is determined primarily by tree size, expressed through diameter at breast height (DBH). The Metric assigns trees to one of four size categories as per the extract from the user guide below. A secondary component of value is the habitat condition assessment.

Table 15 Tree size classes and area equivalents

Size class	Diameter at breast height (cm)	Biodiversity metric area equivalent (ha)
Small	greater than 7.5cm and less than or equal to 30cm	0.0041
Medium	greater than 30cm and less than or equal to 60cm	0.0163
Large	greater than 60cm and less than or equal to 90cm	0.0366
Very large	greater than 90cm	0.0765

Based on the available evidence, the following trees have been added into the baseline:

- 2 × large sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*
- 3 × small hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*
- 1 × medium alder *Alnus glutinosa*

A total of two hawthorn trees remained on the site. All trees have been automatically assigned a moderate habitat condition.

Plate 3.1.

Area of felled trees.

Plates 3.2 to 3.4

Felled trees within the site.

The total value of these trees was 1.2 habitat units.

Habitats

Photos which provide a general overview of the site and supporting data for the Biodiversity Metric are provided in Appendix A. Figure 1 in Appendix B provides an overview of the habitat baseline (including the tree locations).

u1b6 – Other developed land

The red line boundary for the site includes existing access roads to the holiday lodges to the west of the site.

g4 – Modified grassland

Several distinct grassland parcels were present within the current site boundary, alongside agriculturally improved pasture fields located immediately to the north and south. All areas formed part of a wider pastoral unit and were historically managed as grazing land. At the time of survey, the northern and southern fields were actively grazed by sheep.

The grassland margins flanking the access road comprised species-poor rye-grass leys, maintained through very frequent cutting. These areas were dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, with limited structural or botanical diversity.

South of the access road, the land was less well-drained and less intensively managed. Here, the sward remained rye-grass dominated but supported a broader, though still limited, range of coarse grasses, including:

- Frequent cocks-foot *Dactylis glomerata*
- Occasional tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*
- Occasional Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*
- Occasional red fescue *Festuca rubra*

Forb richness was very low, with the sward characterised by:

- Frequent broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*
- Frequent creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*
- Frequent creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*
- Frequent groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*

Soft rush *Juncus effusus* occurred occasionally, reflecting the poorer drainage conditions.

The pasture fields to the north and south of the site were species-poor, modified grasslands, consistent with long-term agricultural improvement and ongoing sheep grazing. These areas were structurally simple, dominated by improved grass species with occasional soft rush.

Including the trees, the combined biodiversity value of the existing habitats within the site equates to **2.61 habitat units.** This value is based on imagery from **21st September 2025.**

Hedgerows
There were no hedgerows within the site boundary.

Watercourses
There were no rivers within 10m of the site boundary or ditches within 5m.

PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES OF FAUNA

Nesting Birds

Due to the proximity to the lodges and current land use, the proposed development site was unsuitable to support ground nesting birds and the development proposals do not require the removal of any trees, hedgerows or scrub.

Other

The application site does not contain any features of high value for bats in terms of foraging and connectivity. No ponds with potential suitability to support breeding amphibians including great crested newt were identified within a 250m radius of the site. The site is presents unsuitable terrain for badger setts. Based on the data obtained, no other ecological constraints are likely to be encountered. This is due to the likely absence of certain species from the site or it has been assessed that the works will not significantly affect the distribution or abundance of any such species or result in actions that may be in breach of the relevant legislation.

HABITAT ENHANCEMENTS AND / OR CREATION

Habitats

Figure 2 in Appendix B provides a UK Habitat Classification map of the site as proposed. The development layout includes nine new holiday units, access, patios and surrounding modified grassland (as per the conditions for the existing units).

During the project design stage and due to the tree loss, Knight Sky Ecology advised that the application was required to provide some set aside land within the development plans for BNG purposes. The loss of the grassland will be offset via the creation of a neutral grassland area to the south of the site. In addition, in order to meet trading rules and achieve net gain, a significant number of trees will need to be planted. Two land parcels have been set aside for tree planting. These areas total approximately 3500$m^{2.}$

The biodiversity metric has accounted for the planting of 70 native trees within two field areas. Both the neutral grassland and the trees have been assigned a high strategic significance in consideration of the Lancashire LNRS. The combined value of the created habitats post-development would be **3.34 habitat units.**

4. EVALUATION AND SUMMARY

BNG

The development proposals will result in a net gain of biodiversity value for habitats comprising **0.73 habitat units (27.98%).** The assessment can confirm that no designated sites, irreplaceable habitats, priority habitats or habitats of medium or high distinctness will be impacted. The tree loss has been applied retrospectively.

PLEASE NOTE: The biodiversity increase would be more than required due to the creation of the neutral grassland which is a larger area than as is required to meet trading rules. This grassland area can be reduced accordingly if desired. The number of planted trees cannot be changed.

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 (grassland = 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.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

BIODIVERSITY GAIN PLAN

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.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is typically required where net gain is to be achieved on-site. In this instance, the habitats to be created are advised to be considered as 'significant'. The maintenance of these significant habitat creation measures must be secured with a legal agreement (planning obligation or conservation covenant) or planning condition for a minimum of 30 years. The local planning authority will consider the most appropriate mechanism for securing net gain and this will need to be agreed at the planning permission stage.

SPECIES ENHANCEMENTS

There does not appear to be any suitable locations for the placement of bird or bat boxes within the site (the holiday units are unsuitable – particularly for bat boxes). However, there is an opportunity to provide boxes on mature trees within the wider area, if the land is owned by the applicant. Two bat boxes and two bird boxes are recommended. The details of the boxes can be provided as a post-permission matter.

APPENDIX A: PHOTOS

Photos 1a & 1b Views south-west from existing access road.	

	
Photo 2. Area of three units to north of access road.	

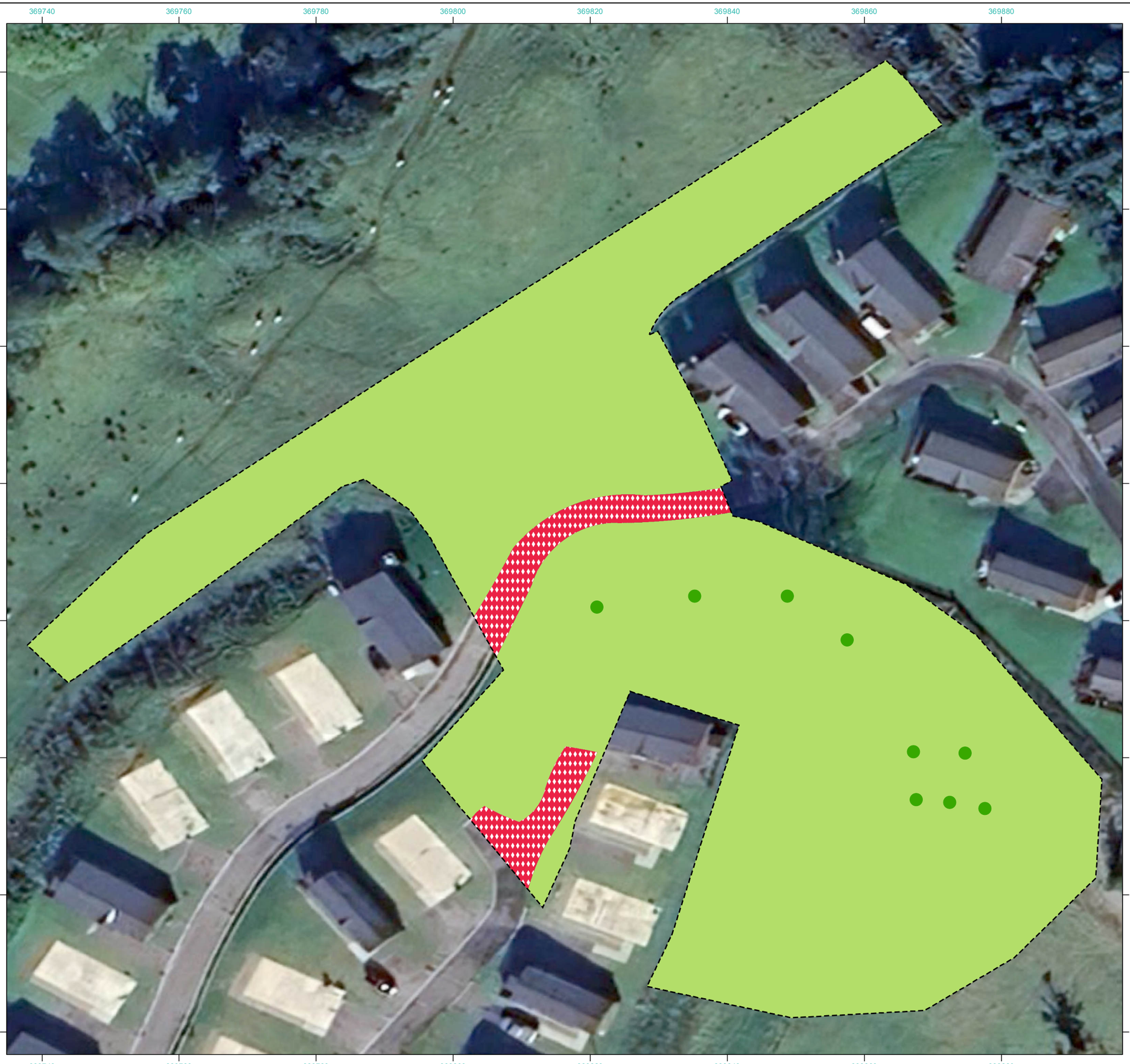
Photos 3a -3c. Views north and north-east across proposed development area.	 

	
Photo 4. South margin of site (BNG planting area).	

Photo 5. North margin of site (BNG planting area).	

APPENDIX B: FIGURES (NEXT PAGE)

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



Survey Information	
	Site boundary (7,330.8m^2)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g4 - Modified grassland (7,015.6m^2
	u1b6 - Other developed land (315.2m^2
	32 - Scattered tree (9)

0 2.5 5 10 15 20 25
Metres

PROJECT TITLE

LAND AT RIBBLE VALLEY VIEW, OLD LANGHO

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
2.1	15/04/26	UKHab	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:

KSEcology/RibbleValleyView/UKHab

SCALE	PLOT SIZE	DATUM	PROJECTION
1:540	A3	OSGB	BNG

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KNIGHT SKY ECOLOGY

Survey Information	
	Site boundary (7,330.8m^2)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
	g3c - Other neutral grassland (1,652.7m^2)
	g4 - Modified grassland (4,132.8m^2)
	u1b6 - Other developed land (1,545.3m^2)
	32 - Scattered tree, retained (2)
	32 - Scattered tree, newly planted

0 2.5 5 10 15 20 25

Metres

PROJECT TITLE

LAND AT RIBBLE VALLEY VIEW, OLD LANGHO

DRAWING TITLE

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

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
2.1	15/04/26	Post-Development	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:

KSEcology/RibbleValleyView/Post-Development

SCALE	PLOT SIZE	DATUM	PROJECTION
1:540	A3	OSGB	BNG

KNIGHT SKY ECOLOGY