Mockbeggars Farm,
Uckfield

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

September 2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Proposals

1.1.1 Aspect Ecology is advising Obsidian Strategic Asset Management Ltd in respect of ecological issues relating to the proposed development of land at Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex, centred at grid reference TQ 475 230, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.1.2 The proposals are for development of the site to provide 60 residential units, with associated access, drainage and landscaping.

1.1.3 To inform the planning application, Aspect Ecology has undertaken a biodiversity net gain assessment of the illustrative masterplan to determine the level of biodiversity net gain that could be achieved under the scheme. This work is based on the Biodiversity Metric calculation tool v4.0 developed by Natural England and informed by biodiversity net gain guidance developed by CIRIA, CIEEM and IEMA. This note sets out the results of the assessment.

1.2 Biodiversity Net Gain

Environment Act

1.2.1 The Environment Act establishes a comprehensive legal framework for environmental improvement within the UK, forming one of the key measures to deliver the vision set out under the 25 Year Environment Plan.

1.2.2 The Environment Act is intended to establish the structure for long-term environmental governance and accountability and includes key measures to drive improvements for nature. In particular, it lays the foundation for a Nature Recovery Network, and introduces a mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain in the planning system, to ensure that new developments enhance biodiversity and create new green spaces for local communities to enjoy. This will require developments to deliver a 10% improvement in biodiversity value, albeit this will not be a legal requirement until the legislation is finalised, currently anticipated to be autumn 2023.

Good Practice Principles for Development

1.2.3 CIRIA, CIEEM and IEMA have developed a set of principles on good practice to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain[1], accompanied by a practical guide[2]. These principles provide a framework that helps improve the UK's biodiversity by contributing towards strategic priorities to conserve and enhance nature while progressing with sustainable development. They also provide a way for industry to show that projects follow good practice. Ten key principles are identified:

1) **Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy.** Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision-makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.

[1] CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016) *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development.*
[2] CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development. A practical guide.*

2) **Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere.** Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity - these impacts cannot be offset to achieve No Net Loss or Net Gain.

3) **Be inclusive and equitable.** Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to Net Gain. Achieve Net Gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible, and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.

4) **Address risks.** Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving Net Gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.

5) **Make a measurable Net Gain contribution.** Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.

6) **Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity.** Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly-justified choices when:

   - Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses
   - Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation
   - Achieving Net Gain locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels
   - Enhancing existing or creating new habitat
   - Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity

7) **Be additional.** Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).

8) **Create a Net Gain legacy.** Ensure Net Gain generates long-term benefits by:

   - Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure Net Gain in perpetuity
   - Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management
   - Designing Net Gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change
   - Mitigating risks from other land uses
   - Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another
   - Supporting local-level management of Net Gain activities

9) **Optimise sustainability.** Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.

10) **Be transparent.** Communicate all Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

2 Methodology

2.1 Habitat Survey

2.1.1 The site was most recently surveyed in August 2023 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and to identify the main habitats and ecological features present. The site was surveyed based on standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology[3], whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. The site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified. The nomenclature used for plant species is based on the Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) Checklist. Habitats were subsequently classified in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification system as set out in the UKHab User Manual[4].

2.1.2 An assessment of the condition of the existing habitats within the site was also undertaken, the results of which are set out in full at Appendix 6212/1.

2.2 Survey Constraints and Limitations

2.2.1 All of the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent during different seasons. The condition assessment survey was undertaken within the optimal season therefore allowing a robust assessment of habitats and botanical interest across the site.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

2.3.1 To quantify the level of biodiversity net gain that can be delivered under the proposed development, the change in biodiversity value resulting from the scheme has been calculated using the Biodiversity Metric version 4.0 calculation tool and associated user guide[5]. This takes account of the size, distinctiveness and ecological condition of existing and proposed habitat areas to provide a proxy measure of the present and forecast biodiversity value of a site, and therefore determine the overall change in biodiversity value.

2.3.2 To establish the habitat baseline, broad habitat areas have been identified based on the survey work undertaken at the site, with habitat condition assigned based on the guidance set out in the User Guide - Technical Annex 1 (Condition Assessment Sheets) and professional judgement. Ten quadrats were sampled within the grassland area, in order to assess the number of species present.

2.3.3 The post-development habitat creation and enhancement is based on Aspect Landscape Planning's Landscape Strategy Plan (Drawing Number: 7397 / ASP3 / LSP, dated November 2021). A number of assumptions have been made in terms of the detailed landscaping and management proposals, based on comparative developments and what is realistic and feasible under the proposed land uses and landscape space types. Further details of assumptions made in populating the metric are provided in Chapter 4 below.

[3] Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010, as amended) *'Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit.'*

[4] UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0

[5] Natural England (March 2023) *Natural England Joint Publication JP039. Biodiversity Metric 4.0: auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide (and associated Technical Annexes)*

3 Habitats and Ecological Features

3.1 The site is dominated by modified grassland and bound by hedgerows, with a small area of lowland mixed deciduous woodland in the south-east of the site. The locations of these habitat types and features are illustrated on Plan 6212/BNG1 and described in detail below. Completed condition assessments can be found at Appendix 6212/1.

3.2 Modified Grassland (Poor Condition)

3.2.1 Field F1, located in the south-west of the site, is classified within the Metric as modified grassland. The grassland within field F1 fails essential condition assessment criterion A for modified grassland, averaging less than 6 species per m^2 and criterion B as the grassland exhibits a largely uniform sward height. Accordingly the modified grassland within field F1 is assessed as being in 'poor condition' in accordance with the User Guide.

3.3 Modified Grassland (Good Condition)

3.3.1 Field F2, located in the north-east of the site, is classified within the Metric as modified grassland. The grassland within field F2 passes essential condition assessment criterion A, having an average of 6.6 species per $m^{2.}$ The grassland passes 6 of the 7 assessment criteria, failing only a single criteria on varied sward height as the grassland exhibits a uniform sward height. Accordingly the modified grassland at the site is assessed as being in 'good condition' in accordance with the User Guide.

3.4 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

3.4.1 The woodland within the south-east of the site is classified within the metric as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and scores 26 on the condition assessment. As scuh, the woodland is assessed as being in moderate condition in accordance with the User Guide.

3.5 Individual Rural Trees (Moderate Condition)

3.5.1 Three semi-mature native trees are present within field F2. In addition, a single mature non-native Varigated Poplar *Populus candicans aurora* is present. All of these trees pass four of the six condition assessment criteria and are therefore assessed as being in moderate condition in accordance with the User Guide.

3.6 Individual Rural Trees (Good Condition)

3.6.1 Two mature native trees are present within field F2. These trees pass five of the six condition assessment criteria and are assessed as being in good condition in accordance with the User Guide.

3.7 Native Hedgerow (Good Condition)

3.7.1 Hedgerows H3 and H5, located at the south-western and north-eastern site boundaries respectively, are classified as native hedgerows and fail no more than two of the eight condition assessment criteria. Accordingly, these hedgerows are assessed as being in good condition.

3.8 Native Hedgerow with Trees

3.8.1 Hedgerows H1, H2 and H4, located at the north-western site boundary, western site boundary and within the centre of the site, are classified as native hedgerows with trees. Hedgerows H1 and H4 fail two of the ten condition assessment criteria and are therefore assessed as being in good condition.

3.8.2 Hedgerow H2 fails four of the ten condition assessment criteria, including both criteria within functional group B relating to hedge base and canopy gaps. Accordingly, hedgerow H2 is assessed as being in poor condition.

4 Post-development Habitats

4.1 Assumptions

4.1.1 The concept plan shows the broad habitats to be created within the site, with specific habitats not attributed to many of the areas, given the outline nature of the application. When inputting the post-development habitat areas and condition to the biodiversity metric, the following assumptions have been made:

- SuDS will be planted with a suitable wetland tolerant grass mix, marginal species and aquatic species as appropriate, and will be managed accordingly, and are therefore assigned the habitat Other neutral grassland.
- Newly created habitat under the proposals will be managed appropriately to reach the assigned target condition (anticipated to be defined by a future management plan). For example, future management prescriptions within areas of other neutral grassland will be subject to an ecologically sensitive management regime, in order to maintain the presence of a minimum 9 species per m^2 necessary to qualify as this habitat type.
- It is anticipated that all hedgerows within the site are to be retained, with the only loss to a small section of hedgerow H4 to facilitate access.

4.2 Strategic Significance

4.2.1 Strategic significance in the Metric is assigned to give extra value to habitats that are located in optimal locations, or are of a type that meet local objectives for biodiversity. No strategic significance has been applied to the habitats pre or post-development of the site.

4.3 Habitat Type and Condition

4.3.1 A summary of post-development habitat creation and enhancement is set out in Table 4.1 below and Table 4.2 overleaf. Post-development habitats are shown on Plan 6212/BNG2.

Table 4.1. Post-development Habitat Creation

Habitat	Target Condition	Condition Rationale
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - Other	This habitat is used for all new buildings, car parks and access roads. In accordance with the guidelines no assessment of condition is required for this habitat type.
Urban – Vegetated garden	Condition Assessment N/A	This habitat is used for all new gardens. In accordance with the guidelines no assessment of condition is required for this habitat type.
Grassland – Other neutral grassland	Moderate	Newly created areas of grassland within public open space at the site will be sown with a wildflower seed mix and subject to ecologically sensitive management prescriptions in order to maximise their floristic diversity and value for wildlife. In addition, new SuDS areas will be sown with a wildflower seed mix comprising species tolerant of waterlogged soils. The Metric calculates the grassland will achieve moderate condition after 5 years.

Grassland – Modified grassland	Moderate	Areas of amenity grassland to be created near to the built development utilising a flowering lawn mix to enhance species diversity. No invasive non-native species would be included and Bracken, scrub and physical damage to be kept to minimum. The grassland is therefore assessed to achieve a moderate condition.
Heathland and Shrub - Mixed Scrub	Moderate	New mixed scrub planting at the site will comprise a number of native shrub species. With appropriate management prescriptions, the Metric calculates this habitat will achieve moderate condition after 5 years.
Woodland – Other woodland; broadleaved	Moderate	New woodland planting will comprise native species of local provenance. With appropriate management prescriptions, it is considered that woodland will achieve at least a moderate condition within 15 years.
Individual Trees – Urban Trees	Moderate	New ornamental and street trees located within the site will comprise native species and specimens will be in good health, achieving moderate condition.
Individual Trees – Rural Trees	Moderate	New trees located within areas of open space and the ancient woodland buffer zone will comprise native species and specimens will be in good health, achieving moderate condition.

Table 4.2. Post-development Habitat Enhancement

Habitat	**Target Condition**	**Condition Rationale**
Grassland – Modified grassland to Other neutral grassland	Good	Retained grassland will be sown with a wildflower mix to increase species diversity within the sward, and subject to ecologically sensitive management prescriptions in order to achieve varied sward height and remove any undesirable or invasive species, resulting in a good representation of a grassland habitat type. As such, this grassland will achieve good condition.

5 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Results

5.1 Metric calculation

5.1.1 The data from the baseline habitat survey work and the proposed habitat enhancement and creation works have been coded into the metric.

5.1.2 In summary, the Metric calculates that the development will result in a 0.98% net gain in habitat units for biodiversity and a 68.65% net gain in hedgerow units. The results are broken down in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Net gain results

	Change in Units	% Change
Habitats	+0.16	+0.98%
Hedgerows	+2.99	+68.65%

5.1.3 The trading summary indicates that the trading rules are satisfied.

5.1.4 Biodiversity benefits will be provided by faunal enhancements, for example through the provision of new bat and bird boxes (which can be secured via suitably worded planning conditions). Such faunal enhancements provide additionality but are not quantified under the Metric as this deals with habitats alone and does not address faunal benefits.

6 Summary and Conclusions

6.1.1 Aspect Ecology is advising Obsidian Strategic Asset Management Ltd in respect of ecological matters relating to the proposed development at Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex.

6.1.2 To inform the planning application, Aspect Ecology has undertaken a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment to determine the level of biodiversity net gain that could be achieved under the scheme, based on the Biodiversity Metric calculation tool v4.0.

6.1.3 The metric demonstrates that a 0.98% net gain in habitat units and a 68.65% net gain in hedgerow units is projected under the proposals.

Plan 6212/BNG1:

Pre-development Habitat Measurements



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Modified Grassland - Good Condition (1.895ha)
- Modified Grassland - Poor Condition (1.68ha)
- Lowland Mixed Deciduoous Woodland (0.0575ha)
- Native Hedgerow (0.125km)
- Native Hedgerow with Trees (0.44km)
- Tree (6)

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Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield	PROJECT
Pre-development Habitat Measurements	TITLE
6212/BNG1	DRAWING NO.
B/AM	REV
September 2023	DATE

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Plan 6212/BNG2:

Post-development Habitat Measurements



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Developed land; sealed surface: Hardstanding (0.9450ha)
- Vegetated garden (0.7125ha)
- Developed land; sealed surface: Building (0.4075ha)
- Proposed Other woodland; broadleaved (0.4100ha)
- Proposed Other neutral grassland (0.5425ha)
- Enhanced Other neutral grassland (0.4250ha)
- Proposed Modified grassland (0.0900ha)
- Proposed Mixed scrub (0.0450ha)
- Retained Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (0.0575ha)
- Species-rich native hedgerow (0.47km)
- Retained native hedgerow (0.125km)
- Retained native hedgerow with trees (0.42km)
- Proposed Urban Tree (56)
- Proposed Rural Tree (34)

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Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield	PROJECT
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Appendix 6212/1:

Completed Condition Assessment Sheets

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)

Grassland - Modified grassland

Habitat Description

ukhab – UK Habitat Classification												
Site name and location	Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex	**On-site or off-site**		On-site								
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)										
Limitations (if applicable)		**Habitat parcel reference**										
		F1	F2									
		Grid reference										

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**										**Notes (such as justification)**
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in Footnote 1). **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.	No	Yes									
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.	No	No									
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	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	Yes									
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].	Yes	Yes									
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.	Yes	Yes									
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).	Yes	Yes									
	Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)	No	Yes									
	Number of criteria passed	5	6									

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)	✓									

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Footnotes

Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* , spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* , curled dock *Rumex crispus* , broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* , common nettle *Urtica dioica* , creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* , greater plantain *Plantago major* , white clover *Trifolium repens* and cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* .

Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.

Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.

Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Condition Sheet: WOODLAND Habitat Type

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type(s)

Woodland and forest - Lowland beech and yew woodland
Woodland and forest - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Woodland and forest - Native pine woodlands
Woodland and forest - Other coniferous woodland
Woodland and forest - Other Scot's pine woodland
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed
Woodland and forest - Upland birchwoods
Woodland and forest - Upland mixed ashwoods
Woodland and forest - Upland oakwood
Woodland and forest - Wet woodland

Habitat Description

ukhab – UK Habitat Classification

This condition sheet is based on the England Woodland Biodiversity Group (EWBG) Woodland Condition Survey Method, available here:

Woodland Wildlife Toolkit (sylva.org.uk)

IMPORTANT: This biodiversity metric woodland condition assessment must be used to assess woodland being input into the biodiversity metric. The outputs of this condition assessment are not equivalent to, nor are they comparable with the scores from the EWBG condition assessment, because the EWBG assessment has been adapted for the biodiversity metric, including the removal of EWBG Indicator 7 (Proportion of favourable land cover around woodland) and Indicator 14 (Size of woodland), and minor changes to other indicators.

Site name and location	Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex	**On-site or off-site**	On-site
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	
Grid reference		**Habitat parcel reference**	

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[1] present.	Two age-classes[1] present.	One age-class[1] present.	2	
B	**Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage**	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland[2].	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland[2].	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland[2].	3	
C	**Invasive plant species**	No invasive species[3] present in woodland.	Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* or cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* not present, other invasive species[3] <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species[3] >10% cover.	3	
D	**Number of native tree species**	Five or more native tree or shrub species[4] found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species[4] found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species[4] across woodland parcel.	2	
E	**Cover of native tree and shrub species**	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native[5].	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native[5].	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native[5].	3	

F	**Open space within woodland**	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6]. Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted[7].	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6].	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6]. But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category[7].	1	
G	**Woodland regeneration**	All three classes present in woodland[8]; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland[8].	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland[8].	2	
H	**Tree health**	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback[9].	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present[9].	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present[9].	3	
I	**Vegetation and ground flora**	Recognisable NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present.	1	
J	**Woodland vertical structure**	Three or more storeys across all survey plots or a complex woodland[11].	Two storeys across all survey plots[11].	One or less storey across all survey plots[11].	1	
K	**Veteran trees**	Two or more veteran trees[12] per hectare.	One veteran tree[12] per hectare.	No veteran trees[12] present in woodland.	1	
L	**Amount of deadwood**	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	1	
M	**Woodland disturbance**	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident[14].	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground[14].	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground[14].	3	
				Total Score (out of a possible 39)	26	

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Result Achieved
Total score >32 (33 to 39)	Good (3)	Moderate
Total score 26 to 32	Moderate (2)	
Total score <26 (13 to 25)	Poor (1)	

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type

Habitat Type(s)

Individual trees – Urban trees
Individual trees – Rural trees
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.

Please see separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of Rural trees.

Habitat Description

Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment):
Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.

Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only):
Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies must overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.

Site name and location	Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex	**On-site or off-site**	On-site
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	
Grid reference		**Habitat parcel reference**	Semi-mature trees

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**	**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	
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).	Yes	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	No	

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.	Yes	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	
	Number of criteria passed	**4**	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/□**
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	✓
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	
Note that ‘Fairly Good and Fairly Poor’ condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.		

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type

Habitat Type(s)

Individual trees – Urban trees
Individual trees – Rural trees
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.

Please see separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of Rural trees.

Habitat Description

Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment):
Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.

Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only):
Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies must overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.

Site name and location	Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex	**On-site or off-site**	On-site
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	
Grid reference		**Habitat parcel reference**	Mature trees

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**	**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	
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).	Yes	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Yes	

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.	Yes	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	
	Number of criteria passed	**4**	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/□**
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	✓
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	
Note that ‘Fairly Good and Fairly Poor’ condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.		

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types

Habitat Type

Native hedgerow
Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch
Native hedgerow with trees
Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch
Species-rich native hedgerow
Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch

Habitat Description

See the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 User Guide Section 9.
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.

Site name and location	Mockbeggars Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex	**On-site or off-site**	On-site
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	

Condition Assessment Criteria

A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook[1] and Favourable Conservation Status document[2]. For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook.
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.

Hedgerow favourable condition attributes

Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)		**Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'**	**Criteria description**	**Habitat parcel reference** H1	H2	H3	H4	H5						**Notes (such as justification)**
				Grid reference										
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**										
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	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. 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).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						
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).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No						
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	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).	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes						
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).	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	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).	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.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						
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.	Yes	No	No	No	Yes						
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[3]) 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 website[4], as well as the BSBI website[5] where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora'[6] 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[7].	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						
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 (e.g., excessive hedgerow cutting).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only														
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient[8]), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	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.	No	No	N/A	No	N/A						
E3.	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.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A						

The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.

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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1
	Score achieved:	**Good (H3&5)**

Condition categories for hedgerows with 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 5 failures in total; **AND** Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (e.g., fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	2
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; **OR** Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1
	Score achieved:	Poor(H2),Good(H1&4)

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

ecology • landscape planning • arboriculture

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