Derek Finnie Associates®
CONSULTANT ECOLOGISTS

# Land east of Lunce's Hill, Haywards Heath

## Biodiversity Net Gain

## January 2025

CIEEM REGISTERED PRACTICE 2024-2025

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**COMMISSIONED BY**

Catesby Strategic Land Limited and Rurban Estates Limited.
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Report Ref: DFA24116V2

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## APPENDICES

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Derek Finnie Associates was commissioned by Catesby Strategic Land Limited and Rurban Estates Limited. to undertake an Ecological Assessment in relation to an area of land referred to as Land east of Lunce's Hill, Haywards Heath, herein referred to as the 'Site' (Figure 1). Catesby is seeking outline planning permission for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, together with the change of use of an existing barn for flexible community or commercial use along with associated outdoor space and landscaping, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, parking, access and associated works (all matters reserved except for access).

## 1.2 Current Policy and Guidance

1.2.1 Within Section 98 of the Environment Act 2021, there is provision for achieving a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) within a development, with the particulars being covered under Schedule 14 of the Act.

1.2.2 With this in mind, Catesby Strategic Land Limited and Rurban Estates Limited have sought to maximise the BNG potential of the Site from the onset, creating ecological valuable habitats within the extensive area of green space within the Site. The following report, therefore, sets out the vision for the Site and assesses the potential uplift in Biodiversity Units that could be realised from the scheme.

# 2 METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Defra Metric

2.1.1 The Defra metric looks at the biodiversity value of a site prior to the proposed development by assigning values to each habitat type, the quality of the habitat and the extent of that habitat. This results in a combined value for the site presented in an arbitrary figure expressed as Biodiversity Units. A similar approach is also taken for linear features within a site, such as hedgerows and rivers. For rivers, a River Corridor Assessment (RCA) is undertaken using the MorPh5 methodology, which needs to be completed by a trained and certified surveyor.

2.1.2 A second calculation is then undertaken for the post development scenario, where professional judgement is used in determining the value of the habitats which will be created as a result of the proposed scheme. The difference in units pre and post development is then expressed as a percentage for habitats, hedgerows and rivers (where applicable).

2.1.3 If a significant increase in BNG value cannot be achieved within the Site, there is the potential to provide off site enhancements to complement on-site works.

2.1.4 The current assessment was undertaken using the Statutory Metric published in July 2024.

2.1.5 As the current scheme is an application for outline permission only it is not possible to provide a detailed assessment of the post development scenario as yet, as these details are not fixed. However, the Defra Guidance on an outline application is that decision maker may need to consider more broadly whether the biodiversity gain condition is capable of being successfully delivered within a site, rather than relying on details plans to demonstrate how it will be delivered. As the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain involves the discharge of the biodiversity gain condition following the grant of planning permission it would be generally inappropriate to refuse an application on the grounds that the biodiversity gain objective will not be met. (Defra Guidance 019 Reference ID: 74-019-20240214).

## 2.2 Site Assessment

2.2.1 A site assessment was made in July 2023 and March 2024 with the habitats present within the Site being assessed and assigned to a category within the *UKHabs V2* classification system. Where appropriate, the Condition of each habitat encountered was assessed using the condition scoring criteria as presented within the Metric.

2.2.2 All survey work was undertaken by Derek Finnie BSc DipCons MSc CEnv MIEnvSc MCIEEM, Managing Director of Derek Finnie Associates who has over 30 years' experience as a practicing ecologist and is a certified RCA surveyor.

# 3 THE SITE

## 3.1 Current description

3.1.1 An 'extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out on the 18th July 2023 and 23rd March 2024. The survey methodology followed that presented by the JNCC (2010). The Phase 1 technique aims to classify each habitat into categories based on the assemblage of plant species present, with the dominant plant species for each habitat being noted. In some cases, sub-divisions or modifications of the standard categories can be made where this is useful in providing further detail.

3.1.2 The Phase 1 survey provides sufficient information to allow the habitats present to be placed into a UKHabs V2 classification category, as used in the Defra Metric.

3.1.3 Additional information was also collected during the site survey to allow the condition of the habitats identified to be assessed based on pre-determined criteria.

3.1.4 The Site, which covers approximately 8.81ha, comprises several fields delineated by hedgerows. A small stream, Pellingford Brook, runs through the centre of the Site.

3.1.5 The fields themselves supports semi-improved grassland which are reportedly normally cut for silage/hay.

3.1.6 The following Phase 1 habitats were encountered within the Site:

- Broad-leaved trees (scattered);
- Hedgerows;
- Scrub;
- Semi-improved grassland;
- Dry ditch;
- Watercourse; and
- Buildings and hardstanding.

3.1.7 Further details of the habitat are presented within the Ecological Assessment (Derek Finnie Associates Report Ref: DFA24115) submitted with the application and hence are not repeated here. For reference, there are no irreplaceable habitats as defined by the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitats) Regulation 2024 on site. And there is no evidence that any form of adverse, or destructive, management has taken place within the Site which would affect the condition of the habitats present.

3.1.8 However, in terms of the BNG Metric, a summary of the habitats is present in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Summary of on-site habitats

| Habitat | Condition | Area/length |
|---|---|---|
| Modified grassland | Moderate | 8.25 |
| Other neutral grassland | Good | 0.1 |
| Bramble scrub | Condition Assessment N/A | 0.2 |
| Developed land; sealed surface | N/A - Other | 0.02 |

| Habitat | Condition | Area/length |
|---|---|---|
| Rural tree | Moderate | 0.24 |
| Native hedgerow with trees | Moderate | 0.168 |
| Native hedgerow with trees | Moderate | 0.2 |
| Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch | Moderate | 0.15 |
| Native hedgerow | Moderate | 0.05 |
| Native hedgerow | Moderate | 0.09 |
| Native hedgerow with trees | Moderate | 0.1 |
| Native hedgerow with trees | Moderate | 0.095 |
| Other rivers and streams | Moderate | 0.25 |

## 3.2 Post development

3.2.1 From the onset, consideration has been given to creating high quality, species rich habitats within the Site to ensure there is a long-term ecological benefit as a result of the development. There has also been a drive to manage the retained habitats in a more ecological sympathetic manner, with the aim of providing long term, sustainable benefits.

3.2.2 Within the landscape strategy for the Site, the creation of new, species rich habitats using native species wherever possible has been one of the principal drivers. These include:

- Creation of 0.35ha of new broad-leaved woodland;
- Creation of 3.6ha of species rich grassland, both dry and damp;
- Creation of 0.2ha of mixed scrub;
- Planting of 0.6ha of amenity grassland; and
- Planting of 100 new trees;
- Enhancements to the river corridor; and
- Creation of 180m of new hedgerows,

3.2.3 The location and extent of the habitat creation and enhancement is depicted on the Landscape Strategy drawing submitted with this application.

# 4 RESULTS

## 4.1 Headline Results

4.1.1 The headline results from the Biodiversity Metric for presented in Table 2.

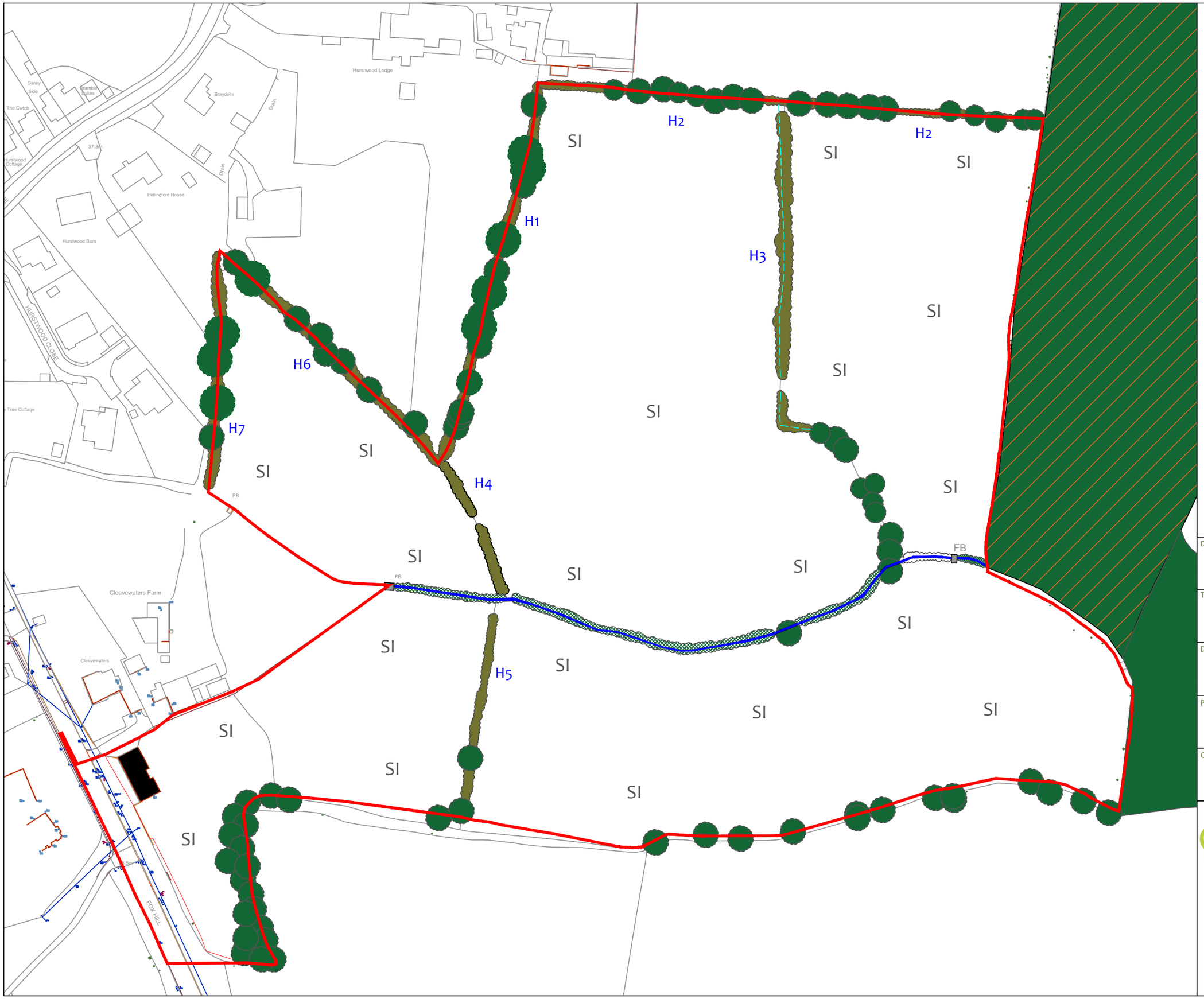
**Table 2.** Headline Results

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement) | *Habitat units* | 3.73 |
| | *Hedgerow units* | 0.85 |
| | *Watercourse units* | 0.29 |
| Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions | *Habitat units* | 0.00 |
| | *Hedgerow units* | 0.00 |
| | *Watercourse units* | 0.00 |
| **FINAL RESULTS** | | |
| Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement) | *Habitat units* | 3.73 |
| | *Hedgerow units* | 0.85 |
| | *Watercourse units* | 0.29 |
| Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement) | *Habitat units* | 10.08% |
| | *Hedgerow units* | 12.39% |
| | *Watercourse units* | 11.62% |
| Trading rules satisfied? | | Yes ✓ |

4.1.2 As can be seen from Table 2, a net increase in the biodiversity value of the Site is achieved for the habitat's component (10.08%), the hedgerows (12.39%) and 11.62% for watercourses. The full Metric has been submitted as a separate Excel workbook.

# 5 DISCUSSION

5.1.1 As can be seen from Table 2, the proposed development is predicted to result in a net biodiversity gain when the habitat creation and enhancement scheme is implemented. It is proposed that a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) be prepared for the scheme to ensure the long-term management of the habitats is undertaken, with appropriate monitoring and remedial works as necessary.




Legend

- Ancient woodland
- Woodland
- Scrub
- Hedgerow
- Watercourse
- Dry ditch
- SI — Semi-improved grassland
- Building

Drawing Number: Figure 1

Title: Phase 1 Habitat Map

Date: January 2025

Project: Lunce's Hill

Client: Catesby & Rurban

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# Appendix 1

# Condition Sheets

**Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type**

**Habitat Types**

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

***Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of rural trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in rural locations.***

**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 should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **On-site or off-site, site name and location** | Lunces Hill | **Survey date and Surveyor name** | D Finnie March 2024 |
| | | **Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)** | |
| **Limitations (if applicable)** | | **Habitat parcel reference** | 1 |
| | | **Grid reference** | |

| | 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). | y | |
| 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). | n | |
| C | The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)[1]. | y | |
| 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. | y | |
| E | Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark. | n | |
| F | More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath. | y | |
| | **Number of criteria passed** | | |

| 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) | x |
| 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[2]** | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

| Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type** | | | |
| **Grassland - Modified grassland** | | | |
| **On-site or off-site, site name and location** | Lunces Hill | **Survey date and Surveyor name** | D Finnie. March 2024 |
| **Limitations (if applicable)** | | **Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)** | |
| **Grid reference** | | **Habitat parcel reference** | |
| **Habitat Description** | | | |
| Semi-improved grassland. Graminoid species include those commonly associated with agriculturally improved grassland such as perennial rye grass Lolium perenne, cock's-foot Dactylis glomerata, Yorkshire fog Holcus lanatus | | | |
| ukhab – UK Habitat Classification | | | |

| | 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 (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.**<br><br>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. | Yes | Sward dominatwed by a few grass species |
| 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 | Sward generally even due to mowing |
| C | Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. may be present).<br><br>Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type. | No | No scrub present |
| 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)[2]. | Yes | |
| F | Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%. | Yes | Minimal bracken presetn art periphery of some fields. |
| G | There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]). | Yes | None noted |
| | **Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)** | | Yes |
| | **Number of criteria passed** | | Five |

| 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) | x | |
| Passes 3 or fewer criteria;<br>OR<br>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: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high and very high distinctiveness)**

**UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Types**

**Grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland**
**Grassland - Lowland dry acid grassland**
**Grassland - Lowland meadows**
**Grassland - Other lowland acid grassland**
**Grassland - Other neutral grassland**
**Grassland - Tall herb communities (H6430)** [Not to be confused with the Tall forbs secondary code – see UKHab guidance for details.]
**Grassland - Upland acid grassland**
**Grassland - Upland calcareous grassland**
**Grassland - Upland hay meadows**
**Sparsely vegetated land - Calaminarian grassland**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **On-site or off-site, site name and location** | Lunces Hill | **Survey date and Surveyor name** | D Finnie, March 2024 |
| **Limitations (if applicable)** | | **Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)** | |
| **Grid reference** | | **Habitat parcel reference** | |

**Habitat Description**

More species rich grassland with sweet vernal grass Anthoxanthum odoratum and marsh foxtail Alopecurus geniculatus were also present, as were sneezewort Achillea ptarmica, meadowsweet Filipendula ulmaria, hedge bedstraw Galium mollugo, black knapweed Centaurea nigra, bird's-foot trefoil Lotus corniculatus and teasel Dipsacus fullonum.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ukhab – UK Habitat Classification | | | |

| | Condition Assessment Criteria | Criterion passed (Yes or No) | Notes (such as justification) |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).[1]<br><br>**Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.** | 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 insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed. | Yes | Limited varitation but sme present |
| C | Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens[2]. | Yes | Verey little bare ground |
| D | Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) is less than 5%. | Yes | Limited bracken |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| E | Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition[3] and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area.<br><br>If any invasive non-native plant species[4] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[5]) are present, this criterion is automatically failed. | Yes | |
| **Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types** | | | |
| F | There are 10 or more vascular plant species per $m^2$ present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count).<br><br>**Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.** | Yes | |
| | **Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)** | | |
| | **Number of criteria passed** | | |

| Condition Assessment Result | Condition Assessment Score | Score Achieved ×/✓ |
|---|---|---|
| **Acid grassland types (Result out of 5 criteria)** | | |
| Passes 5 criteria | Good (3) | |
| Passes 3 or 4 criteria | Moderate (2) | |
| Passes 2 or fewer criteria | Poor (1) | |
| **Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)** | | |
| Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F. | Good (3) | Yes |
| Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A. | Moderate (2) | |
| Passes 2 or fewer criteria;<br>OR<br>Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F. | Poor (1) | |

**Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score**

**Notes**

**Footnote 1** - Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description.

**Footnote 2** – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover.

**Footnote 3** - Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type include: 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* . There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site.

**Footnote 4** – 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, by applying professional judgement.

**Footnote 5** – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

# Appendix 2

# Landscape Strategy


Site Boundary

New and Enhanced Green Infrastructure Corridors

Existing Vegetation Retained Where Possible and Enhanced Through Additional Planting and Improved Management

Proposed Boundary Planting to Increase Connectivity for Local Wildlife and Strengthen Boundaries

Proposed Woodland in the South-east Corner of the Site to Connect with Adjacent Habitat and Extend Woodland into the Site

Proposed Green Space Pockets to Break up Built Form

Proposed LEAP

Proposed Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

Based on: 604_P01- Illustrative Masterplan

client

**Catesby Strategic Land Limited and Rurban Estates Limited**

project title

**Land East of Lunce's Hill**

drawing title

**Illustrative Landscape Strategy**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| date | **10 JANUARY 2025** | drawn by | **GYo** |
| drawing number | **edp8571_d011b** | checked | **MBe** |
| scale | **1:2,000 @ A3** | QA | **DJo** |


the environmental dimension partnership

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