BNG Metric: DEFRA Biodiversity Metric v4.1

Proposed Development: Residential development (11 dwellings) with associated access, private gardens, and landscaping

6th November 2025

Site: Former Garth School Site, Coronation Drive, Salterbeck

Carried out by: Environmental Design UK

Environmental Design UK .com

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EDUK General Notes

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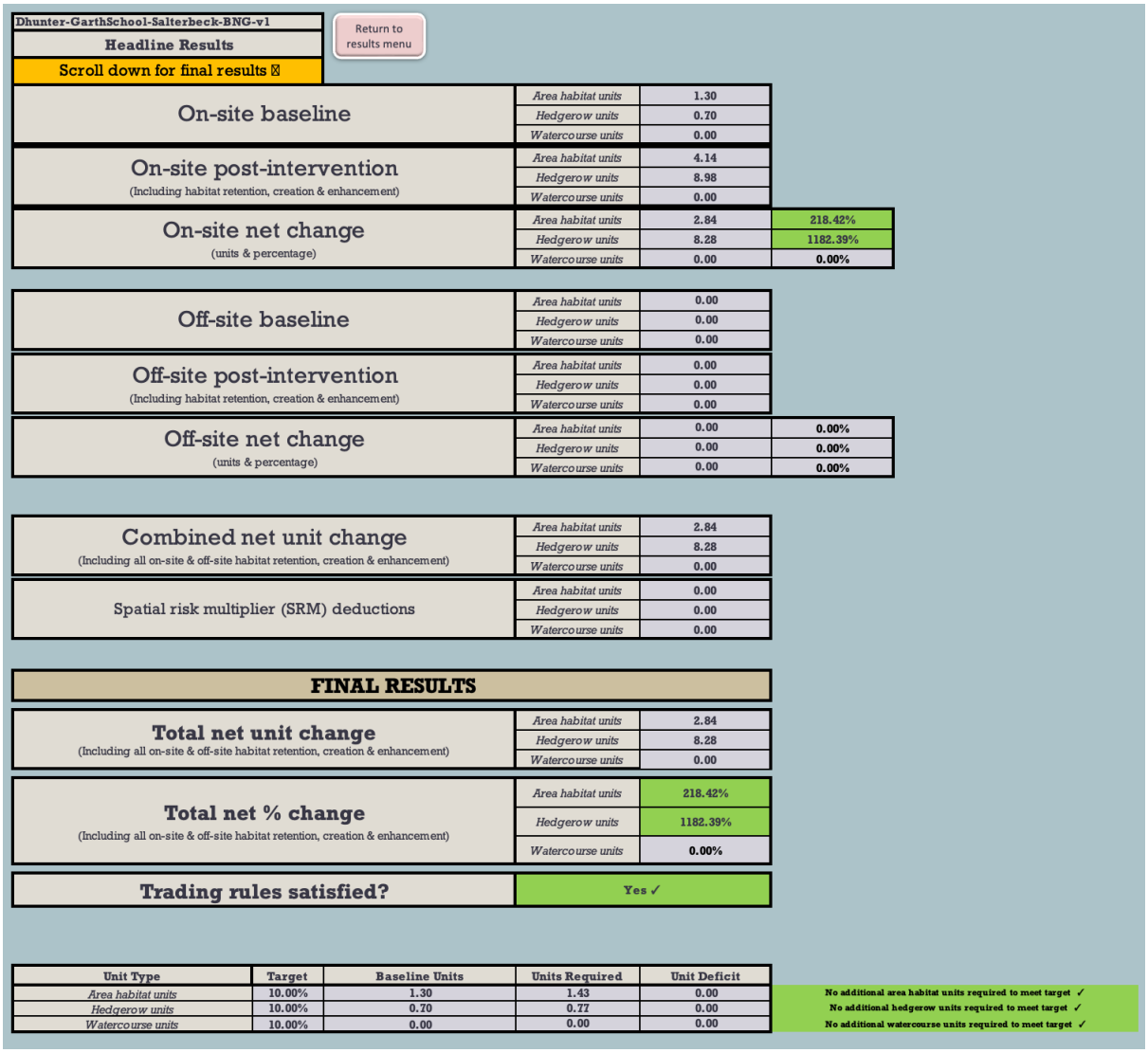

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Headline Results

Scroll down for final results

On-site baseline	*Area habitat units*	1.30	
	Hedgerow units	0.70	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	4.14	
	Hedgerow units	8.98	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Area habitat units*	2.84	218.42%
	Hedgerow units	8.28	1182.39%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	*Area habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	*Area habitat units*	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	2.84	
	Hedgerow units	8.28	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	*Area 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)	*Area habitat units*	2.84
	Hedgerow units	8.28
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	218.42%
	Hedgerow units	1182.39%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	1.30	1.43	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.70	0.77	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Environmental Design UK (EDUK), in partnership with CH Tree Surgeons and Arborist, employs NPTC-registered tree surgeons holding both NPTC and ISA certifications. The author is an experienced arboriculturist, proficient in BS5837 surveys and the preparation of CAD-based Tree Constraints Plans (TCP) and Tree Protection Plans (TPP).

Introduction and Purpose of the Report

This Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment has been prepared to support the proposed residential development at the former Garth School site, Coronation Drive, Salterbeck. The primary purpose of this report is to establish a quantifiable baseline of existing habitats on site, evaluate the anticipated ecological effects of the proposed development, and demonstrate how the project will deliver a measurable net increase in biodiversity value. The assessment follows the statutory requirement for a minimum 10% BNG, as set out within the Environment Act 2021, and applies the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (version 4.1) to determine habitat unit changes associated with the proposals. The findings of this report are intended to inform the planning process and ensure that ecological enhancement measures are designed, implemented, and maintained effectively for at least 30 years.

Applicant and Site Information

The applicant is Mr D. Hunter. The application site comprises the former Garth School grounds, which have remained vacant and unused for several years. As a result of this period of disuse, the site has undergone a degree of natural regeneration, with areas of former hard surfacing now interspersed with rank semi-improved grassland, scrub colonisation, and remnant landscaping. The previous built development has been mostly removed, with only low-level traces of infrastructure occasionally visible. The site therefore represents a mosaic of early successional habitats typical of abandoned brownfield land.

Site Location and Context

The site is situated on the southern side of Salterbeck within a predominantly residential setting. Existing housing borders the site to the south and east, providing a sharply defined urban edge. To the north and west, the site adjoins an area of broadleaved plantation and informal public open space, forming part of a wider green corridor running through the settlement.

The surrounding landscape contains a network of urban greenspaces, amenity grassland, landscaping associated with housing estates, and pockets of secondary woodland and scrub that have developed on former industrial and institutional land. The wider ecological context is therefore characterised by fragmented but functionally connected semi-natural habitats that support generalist species and locally common fauna.

Planning Background and Requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain

Under the Environment Act 2021, all qualifying development proposals must demonstrate the delivery of a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. The gain must be evidenced and calculated using a recognised metric and secured through a legal mechanism to ensure ongoing management for no less than 30 years. Cumberland Council requires the submission of a BNG Assessment at either the outline or full planning stage, depending on

the level of design detail available. This includes provision of the biodiversity metric calculations, habitat retention and creation proposals, and a commitment to future monitoring and verification. Post-construction surveys and reporting will also be required as part of the discharge of planning conditions, ensuring that the intended gains are fully realised and maintained over the long term.

Relevant Legislation, Guidance, and Policy Framework

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which places a duty on development to contribute to the enhancement of the natural environment, as well as the statutory provisions of the Environment Act 2021 relating to mandatory BNG. The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (version 4.1) has been used to quantify existing site habitats and proposed post-development habitat conditions. Good practice guidance from BS42020:2013 (Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development) and BS8683:2021 (Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain) has been applied to ensure that the approach to habitat creation, enhancement, and long-term stewardship is robust, proportionate, and deliverable. Additional reference has been made to Natural England standing advice, UKHab classification guidance, and relevant local planning policy concerning green infrastructure and ecological enhancement.

Site Description

Overview of Existing Site Condition

The site comprises approximately 0.5 hectares of previously developed land, formerly occupied by the Garth School complex. Since the demolition of the school buildings, the land has remained unmanaged and has undergone natural regeneration.

As a result, the site is characterised by a mosaic of early successional habitats, including rough semi-improved grassland, gorse and mixed scrub, and bare or sparsely vegetated ground. Patches of the original hardstanding associated with the former school infrastructure remain visible across the site but are partially broken and colonised with pioneer vegetation. Overall, the site represents a transitional post-demolition landscape undergoing secondary succession and supporting a range of ruderal plant species typical of disturbed soils.

Surrounding Landscape and Ecological Connectivity

The site is contiguous with a belt of broadleaved woodland to the north, which forms part of a wider network of green infrastructure extending through the settlement. This corridor provides opportunities for ecological movement and dispersal, functioning as a connective route for locally common bird species, small terrestrial mammals, and a range of invertebrate assemblages. The woodland edge and open scrub habitat offer potential low-value foraging habitat for bats. The surrounding wider landscape includes residential

housing estates, amenity greenspace, playing fields, and intermittent patches of secondary woodland, which together form a fragmented yet functionally linked ecological matrix.

Site with red line boundary

Designated Sites and Ecological Constraints
No statutory or non-statutory designated wildlife sites occur within or immediately adjoining the application boundary. The nearest ecological assets of note comprise urban woodland corridors and council-managed public greenspace located within the wider landscape, but these are not directly affected by the development. Due to the disturbed and regenerating nature of the site, habitat suitability for protected species is generally low; however, common nesting birds and small mammals are likely to be present within scrub-dominated compartments. No evidence of priority or specially protected fauna has been recorded, and the site does not contain any priority habitats listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Summary of Baseline Ecological Features
Baseline habitat mapping and assessment were carried out using the UKHab classification system and subsequently translated into the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric for the purposes of calculating habitat units. The following habitat types were identified on site:

- Developed land – sealed or partially sealed surface associated with former hardstanding
- Vacant/derelict land supporting ruderal and pioneer vegetation
- Mixed scrub in moderate yet variable condition
- Gorse-dominated scrub in moderate condition
- Bare ground and sparsely vegetated surfaces
- Native hedgerow in poor structural and species-richness condition

These baseline habitats reflect the transitional, unmanaged nature of the site and collectively form the foundation against which Biodiversity Net Gain outcomes have been assessed.

Methodology

Data Sources and Survey Methods
The baseline ecological assessment was informed by a combination of desk-based review and site-based inspection. Existing aerial imagery and digital mapping layers were used to establish the general habitat structure, topography, and historic land use. A walkover survey was undertaken on 7th October by EDUK to ground-truth habitat types and assess vegetation structure, composition, and any indicators of previous management. Habitat recording followed standard site appraisal principles, and all features were mapped directly in relation to the development boundary. Boundary and internal hedgerows were assessed using the DEFRA Hedgerow Condition Assessment methodology to determine structural integrity, species diversity, and functional ecological value.

Habitat Classification
All baseline habitats were classified in accordance with the UKHab Habitat Classification System (Version 2.0), ensuring consistency with national recording standards and compatibility with the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric. Each habitat parcel was assigned a habitat type code and associated provisional condition category based on vegetation structure, species assemblage, and evidence of ecological function. These classifications were subsequently used to calculate baseline habitat units.

Application of the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric
The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (v4.1) was used to quantify biodiversity value both pre- and post-development. The metric applies a weighted scoring system that considers habitat distinctiveness, condition, and area, alongside risk multipliers relating to time to target condition, difficulty of establishment, and long-term security of enhancements. Hedge habitat units were calculated separately in accordance with the Hedgerow Module, reflecting their linear habitat value and ecological connectivity function. The final net gain calculation compares baseline units to proposed post-development units to determine whether the scheme delivers a measurable net increase in biodiversity.

Limitations
Access limitations were encountered in areas of dense scrub and bramble, where ground-level visibility was restricted. However, vegetation type and extent could be reliably interpreted through edge inspection and aerial mapping, meaning that this constraint did not materially affect the reliability of habitat classification. No seasonal botanical survey was undertaken for detailed species composition; however, given the regenerating and early successional nature of the site, this does not affect the robustness of the baseline habitat assessment or the BNG calculations. The assessment is therefore considered suitable and sufficient for planning determination purposes.

Baseline Biodiversity Assessment

Baseline Area Habitats
The baseline ecological condition of the site was quantified using the UKHab classification framework and entered the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (v4.1). A total of 0.5 hectares of habitat was recorded within the site boundary. Habitat cover reflects the post-demolition and unmanaged nature of the land, with a mosaic dominated by early successional and regenerating vegetation. Key baseline habitat types include:

Baseline Habitats

The site comprises a mosaic of early successional brownfield habitats that have developed following the demolition and clearance of the former school buildings. This condition is

typical of previously developed land that has been left unmanaged for several years. Baseline habitats were mapped using UKHab classification and assessed in accordance with the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (v4.1). The following habitat types were recorded within the site:

• Developed land – sealed surface (approx. 0.21 ha)
Residual areas of former playground, access surfacing and compacted sub-base. This habitat supports no vegetation and holds negligible ecological value beyond limited runoff management and occasional invertebrate use.

• Vacant or derelict land (approx. 0.12 ha)
Disturbed substrate supporting scattered ruderal and pioneer vegetation such as rosebay willowherb, creeping thistle and nettle. Distinctiveness is low and condition is poor due to patchy cover and limited species diversity.

• Bare ground (approx. 0.05 ha)
Exposed mineral substrate with very sparse vegetation. Ecological function is minimal, though some microhabitat value for invertebrates is possible. Distinctiveness and condition are low.

• Mixed scrub (approx. 0.07 ha)
Scrub dominated by bramble with developing willow and young birch. This habitat provides nesting and cover for small birds and mammals and contributes to local habitat structure. Distinctiveness is medium and condition is moderate.

• Gorse scrub (approx. 0.05 ha)
Dense stands of Ulex europaeus. While structurally valuable as shelter and potential nesting habitat, botanical diversity is limited. Distinctiveness is medium and condition is moderate.

The site therefore represents a transitional mosaic progressing through natural regeneration, with some habitats offering moderate ecological function, although overall biodiversity value at baseline is relatively low.

Baseline Hedgerows

Approximately 0.29 km of hedgerow is present along site boundaries. These hedgerows are structurally fragmented and lack species diversity and were assessed as poor condition. While of low biodiversity value at present, they provide important connectivity between adjacent green space and residential gardens and therefore present a strong opportunity for enhancement.

Baseline Biodiversity Unit Values (DEFRA Metric 4.1)

Habitat Category	Baseline Units
Area Habitat Units	1.30
Hedgerow Units	0.70
Watercourse Units	0.00

Baseline Hedgerows

A single boundary hedgerow feature (recorded as three linear sections for the metric) runs along parts of the northern and eastern boundaries, with a total combined length of approximately 0.29 km. The hedgerow is presently in poor condition, being discontinuous, species-poor and unmanaged. Although of low baseline unit value, this feature provides functional ecological connectivity to the broader green corridor and is therefore a key target for enhancement.

Baseline Unit Values (As Calculated Using DEFRA Metric 4.1)

- Area Habitat Units: 1.30 units
- Hedgerow Units: 0.70 units
- Watercourse Units: 0.00 units

These baseline values form the reference condition against which post-development habitat creation and enhancement proposals have been assessed, ensuring compliance with mandatory BNG requirements.

Proposed Development and Habitat Change

Summary of Proposed Development
The proposed development comprises the construction of 11 residential dwellings with an internal access road, parking provision, and private domestic garden areas. The development layout has been designed to retain and respect the existing site boundaries, particularly along the northern and western edges where mature vegetation forms part of a wider ecological corridor. The scheme incorporates new green infrastructure, delivering a multifunctional landscape that supports biodiversity, provides visual amenity, manages surface water sustainably, and enhances the ecological value of the site over the long term.

Habitat Plan / UKHab Plan

Habitat Creation

The development incorporates a coordinated programme of habitat creation and enhancement, delivering measurable biodiversity improvements across the 0.50 ha site. Habitat proposals focus on establishing a structurally diverse mosaic of grassland, scrub, tree planting and wetland SuDS features, with long-term management to ensure ecological value increases over time. The key habitat creation elements are as follows:

• Other Neutral Grassland (0.18 ha)
Establishment of a wildflower-rich meadow using a low-nutrient neutral grassland seed mix. This habitat will provide nectar and pollen resources for pollinating insects, improve invertebrate diversity and structure, and support foraging opportunities for small mammals and birds. Annual cut-and-collect management will be used to progressively reduce soil nutrient levels and increase forb cover.

• Modified Grassland (0.05 ha)
Creation of managed semi-improved grassland forming part of the shared open space

network. This grassland will be maintained at a slightly relaxed mowing regime to allow flowering of native herbs while still allowing for public use and visual amenity.

• Rain Garden and SuDS Meadow Planting (0.05 ha)
Surface water attenuation features will incorporate wet meadow and moisture-tolerant planting. These habitats will support water filtration and storage, while providing structurally varied vegetation of value to hoverflies, bees and other wetland-associated invertebrates. Fertiliser inputs will be avoided to maintain species diversity.

• Wood-Pasture and Scattered Native Trees (0.10 ha)
Native trees will be planted along the western and southern boundaries to strengthen the existing green corridor. Trees will be positioned irregularly to form a developing wood-pasture character, allowing natural understorey establishment and providing commuting and foraging habitat for bats and birds.

• Mixed Scrub Mosaic (0.10 ha)
Scrub planting will be established to form transitional edge habitat between grassland and woodland areas. This habitat creates nesting opportunities for birds and offers sheltered foraging and refuge patches for small mammals. Rotational management will maintain a varied age and height structure.

• Wildlife Pond (0.02 ha)
A small, fish-free pond is proposed as part of the SuDS network. The pond will include shallow marginal shelves and emergent vegetation suitable for amphibians and aquatic invertebrates. Vegetation will be managed on a low-intervention cycle to maintain structural diversity.

Private Gardens and Hedgerow Network
Private gardens will be enclosed with species-rich native hedgerows, contributing directly to the hedgerow biodiversity unit gain recorded within the BNG metric (0.45 km total post-intervention hedgerow units). The hedgerow network will enhance small mammal and amphibian permeability, support pollinators, and strengthen ecological connectivity with the adjacent woodland edge. Homeowner guidance will encourage inclusion of nectar-rich planting, bird boxes and log or stone refuges to support long-term biodiversity benefit.

Biodiversity Net Gain Results (Summary)

The Biodiversity Metric (version 4.1) has been applied to compare the baseline ecological value of the site with the predicted value following the implementation of the proposed habitat creation and enhancement measures.

The results confirm that the development delivers a substantial increase in biodiversity value and exceeds the statutory requirement to provide at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. A summary of the metric outputs is provided below.

Area Habitat Net Gain: +218.42%
The proposed landscape strategy replaces low-value habitats such as sealed surfaces, bare ground and early successional scrub with a more diverse mosaic of meadow, scrub-edge, woodland planting and SuDS-based wet meadow features. These habitats deliver significantly higher distinctiveness and condition scores, resulting in a large net gain in area habitat units.

Hedgerow Net Gain: +1182.39%
The introduction of new species-rich boundary hedgerows and the inclusion of connected hedgerow planting within private plot boundaries results in a major uplift in hedgerow units. These features enhance ecological connectivity across the site and provide movement corridors for birds, small mammals and invertebrates.

BNG Trading Rules Compliance
All metric trading rules are satisfied. No habitat of higher distinctiveness is replaced with one of lower distinctiveness, and risks associated with habitat establishment, time-to-maturity and delivery are correctly accounted for within the metric.

Compliance with Statutory Requirement
The development achieves a biodiversity net gain substantially higher than the minimum 10% requirement set out under the Environment Act 2021. The proposed strategy therefore meets both national and local planning policy expectations and delivers a meaningful improvement in ecological value.

Habitat Management and 30-Year Maintenance Plan

Overview

This Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan outline the long-term ecological management measures required to ensure that all newly created and enhanced habitats associated with the proposed development at the Former Garth School site reach and maintain their target condition for a minimum period of 30 years. This approach aligns with the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements set out under the Environment Act (2021) and follows management standards and good practice guidance from Natural England, CIRIA SuDS Manuals, BS42020:2013, BS8683:2021, and the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric v4.1.

The management prescriptions apply to all habitats created or enhanced within the development, specifically:

• Species-rich meadow grassland
• Rain gardens and SuDS-compatible wetland/attenuation features
• Broadleaved woodland creation
• Mixed scrub creation and enhancement
• Wildlife Pond(s) / Priority Pond habitat
• Native species-rich hedgerows, including both boundary hedgerows and garden boundary hedges

Management activities will commence following the completion of construction and remain in place for the full 30-year maintenance period, with periodic monitoring and adaptive management to ensure target condition is maintained.

General Management Principles

• No peat, imported topsoil, or inorganic fertilisers are to be used in habitat creation areas.
• Herbicide use is to be minimal, and only targeted to control invasive or dominant undesirable species.
• Public access will be managed to prevent trampling of sensitive vegetation.
• All planting will use locally appropriate native species of British provenance.

Habitat-Specific Management Prescriptions

Species-Rich Meadow Grassland

Objective: To establish and maintain a structurally diverse, flower-rich sward.

Years 1–5 Establishment:
• Cut to 50–70 mm once monthly during growing season to suppress nutrient grasses.
• Remove all cuttings to reduce soil fertility.

Years 6–30 Maintenance:
• Adopt a cut and collect regime, with:

- Summer hay cut (June/July)
- Autumn aftermath cut (September/October)

• Spot-control coarse species (e.g., thistle, dock, nettle) by selective hand-pulling or wicking herbicide only where required.

Rain Gardens and SuDS Wetland Planting

Objective: To maintain hydrological functionality and plant species diversity.

- Maintain inflow/outflow channels free from silt and blockages.
- Remove litter and debris quarterly.
- Control aggressive species (reedmace, willowherb, creeping thistle) where they threaten structural diversity.
- Replace any failed planting in the first 5 years.

Broadleaved Woodland Creation

Objective: To establish a stable, mixed-age native woodland belt.

- Annual replacement of failed saplings for first 5 years.
- Maintain shelters and stakes until trees are self-supporting.
- Light touch thinning after year 10 to encourage structural diversity.
- No public access within root protection zones.

Mixed Scrub Creation

Objective: To form a structurally diverse shrub layer benefitting nesting birds and small mammals.

- Allow natural colonisation and self-seeding.
- Retain deadwood in situ where safe to do so.
- Cut back one-third of scrub on a rotational 5-year cycle to prevent senescence and maintain varied age structure.

Wildlife Pond(s) / Priority Pond Habitat

Objective: To maintain a clean, unshaded aquatic environment suitable for amphibians and invertebrates.

- Maintain 30–60% emergent/ marginal vegetation cover.
- Remove leaf litter and silt build-up every 3–5 years, leaving at least 50% of pond untouched to preserve fauna.
- Prevent stocking of ornamental fish.
- Maintain open light conditions (avoid shading >25%).

Native Species-Rich Hedgerows (Including Garden Boundaries)

Objective: To create continuous, structurally varied wildlife corridors.

• Hedge trimming is to be conducted every 2–3 years outside bird nesting season (Sept–Feb).
• Avoid flail cutting; use hand trimming to maintain flowering and berry production.
• Replant gaps annually with matching native species mixes.

Monitoring & Review

• Formal ecological monitoring will be undertaken at Years 1, 5, 10, 20, and 30, with reports submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
• Adaptive management will be applied where monitoring identifies shortfalls in condition or establishment success.

Management responsibilities

Long-term stewardship of the created habitats will be delivered through a clearly defined management structure to ensure that all measures required for Biodiversity Net Gain are implemented and maintained for a minimum of 30 years. Day-to-day management of communal habitats will be undertaken by a management company (or land stewardship trust) appointed by the applicant. The management body will be responsible for procuring competent contractors, implementing the prescriptions in the Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan, and commissioning the scheduled ecological monitoring at years 1, 5, 10, 20 and 30. The management body will also hold the maintenance budget and contingency fund, and will be party to the legal agreement securing BNG (section 106 agreement or conservation covenant).

Private plot boundaries that include native species-rich hedgerows will be maintained by individual homeowners under a standard covenant. The covenant will require retention of the hedgerow, wildlife-sensitive trimming outside the bird-nesting season, gap-planting where losses occur, and prohibition of removal without written consent from the management body. On first occupation, each household will be provided with a homeowner guidance leaflet setting out the required actions, prohibited activities, and contact details for advice or approvals.

All surface water features, including ponds, rain gardens and any associated swales, will be operated and maintained by a qualified maintenance contractor acting under instruction from the management company. Inspections will follow CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753) guidance and will include routine litter removal, vegetation management, inlet/outlet

checks, and periodic desilting. Any works affecting water levels or structures will be carried out by competent personnel and logged in the site maintenance record.

During the construction and initial establishment phases (up to five years post-completion), the contractor will be responsible for establishment tasks (watering, replacement of failed stock, protection repairs) under the supervision of the project ecologist. At practical completion the contractor will produce a handover pack comprising as-built habitat plans, plant supply records (provenance/certification), warranties, and a defects schedule. The management company will assume responsibility at the end of the defects period.

Governance and reporting will be coordinated by the management company. The appointed ecologist will undertake condition checks against the DEFRA Metric targets and provide short compliance reports to the Local Planning Authority at the agreed milestones. If monitoring identifies a shortfall against target condition, the management company will implement corrective actions recommended by the ecologist (e.g. additional sowing, plug planting, gapping-up, altered mowing regime, selective thinning).

Financial security for the 30-year term will be provided through the legal agreement and an agreed funding mechanism (service charge or endowment). The agreement will include access rights for the management company and ecologist to enter private plots solely to inspect and maintain hedgerows where necessary to meet BNG obligations.

Quick reference table

Habitat / area	Responsible party	Notes
Shared/public open space habitats	Management company or land stewardship trust	Secured by planning condition and s106 or conservation covenant; holds budget and appoints contractors and ecologist.
Private gardens (hedgerows only)	Individual homeowners under covenant	Homeowner guidance on trimming, no removal, gap-planting; management company retains inspection/enforcement rights.
Ponds and SuDS rain gardens	SuDS maintenance contractor under management company	Operate to CIRIA C753; routine inspections, vegetation management, desilting and safety checks.
Construction and establishment (first 5 years)	Principal contractor with project ecologist oversight	Watering, replacements, protection repairs; handover pack at end of defects period.

Habitat / area	Responsible party	Notes
Monitoring and reporting	Appointed ecologist commissioned by management company	Condition checks at years 1, 5, 10, 20 and 30; adaptive management where targets are not met.

Habitat-Specific Management Prescriptions

The following management prescriptions are designed to ensure that newly established habitats progress toward and maintain their target condition, consistent with the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (v4.1) and the 30-year BNG delivery requirement. Management focuses on sustaining species diversity, controlling nutrient levels, supporting structural variation and ensuring habitat connectivity across the site.

Other Neutral Grassland (Approx. 0.18 ha; Target Condition: Good)

The grassland will be managed through low-intensity meadow mowing. A single annual cut will be undertaken in late July–August, following flowering and seed set. All cut material will be removed from site to prevent nutrient build-up; mulching is not permitted. Where growth is excessive, a second light cut may take place in autumn with arisings removed.

No fertilisers, turf conditioners or topsoil enrichment will be applied. Spot treatment of injurious weeds may be undertaken if required, avoiding blanket herbicide application. Small-scale scarification or disturbance will be introduced every 3–5 years to maintain forb diversity. If species richness declines over time, plug planting or green hay introduction will be used.

Rain Gardens and SuDS Wet Meadow Swales (Approx. 0.05 ha; Target Condition: Good)

SuDS features will be maintained to retain infiltration and ecological function. Annual inspection will include vegetation cover checks, removal of sediment accumulation and control of vigorous species that may limit diversity. Bare areas will be re-seeded with suitable wet meadow species.

No nutrient addition or chemical treatment will be used. Inlets and outlets will be inspected twice yearly and after major storm events. Establishment watering may occur during the first two years only.

Wood-Pasture / Parkland (Approx. 0.10 ha; Target Condition: Good)

Native trees will be planted at low density within meadow grassland to create an open-structured parkland character. Young trees will be protected with guards or mesh where necessary. Weed control will focus on hand management or organic mulch.

Light thinning and form pruning may commence after Year 8 to encourage healthy crown structure. Deadwood will be retained unless it poses a safety concern.

Mixed Scrub (Approx. 0.10 ha; Target Condition: Good)

Scrub will be managed to develop structural variation. Trimming will occur on a rotational basis every 4–6 years, maintaining patches of different height and density. Fruiting shrubs such as hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose will be retained to support nesting and overwintering birds.

Priority Wildlife Pond (Approx. 0.02 ha including margins; Target Condition: High)

The pond will remain fish-free. Emergent and marginal vegetation will be managed on a three-year rotation, removing no more than one-third of vegetation at a time. No cuttings, garden waste or leaf material will enter the pond. Water clarity and aquatic vegetation cover will be monitored.

Modified Grassland (Approx. 0.05 ha; Target Condition: Good)

Modified grassland areas will be maintained under low-input mowing (typically 4–6 cuts per year) with arisings removed. This provides functional greenspace while supporting nectar resources and reducing nutrient accumulation over time.

Native Species-Rich Hedgerows (Approx. 1.3 km; Target Condition: Good within 12 years)

Hedgerows will be maintained to promote continuous woody cover and seasonal flowering and fruiting. Trimming will be carried out every 2–3 years in January–February to retain winter food resources. Selected shrubs at regular intervals will be allowed to grow into taller standards to enhance structure.

Private garden hedgerows will be retained under homeowner guidance notes, requiring wildlife-sensitive trimming and replacement of failed plants to maintain continuity.

Securing Long-Term Management

The implementation of this Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan will be secured by planning condition and a 30-year legal mechanism, being either:
- A Section 106 Agreement, or
- A Conservation Covenant (as provided for under the Environment Act 2021).

Both mechanisms will ensure funding, management responsibility and monitoring obligations are legally enforceable for the full 30-year period.

Summary and Conclusions

Net Gain Outcome

This Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has evaluated the Former Garth School site in Salterbeck using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric (version 4.1), supported by UKHab habitat mapping and hedgerow condition assessment. The baseline habitats comprise a mosaic of sealed surfaces, bare and disturbed ground, modified grassland, mixed scrub and gorse scrub, alongside short sections of poor-quality native hedgerow. These habitats reflect natural regeneration following the former school use of the site.

The proposed development includes a targeted programme of habitat creation and enhancement. Key measures include the creation of species-rich neutral grassland, rain gardens and wet meadow SuDS features, native tree planting within a wood-pasture structure, mixed native scrub areas, a small wildlife pond, and new species-rich hedgerow planting within public and private boundaries. These interventions are designed to improve ecological connectivity, increase structural vegetation diversity, provide pollinator and foraging habitat, and support a range of locally occurring faunal species.

The Biodiversity Metric outputs confirm that the development delivers a substantial measurable gain in biodiversity value, specifically:

- Area habitat net gain: +218.42%
- Hedgerow habitat net gain: +1182.39%
- All trading rules satisfied
- Statutory 10% net gain requirement exceeded by a significant margin

The assessment therefore demonstrates that the proposed development achieves a strong and meaningful biodiversity uplift in accordance with the Environment Act (2021) and relevant national and local planning policy.

Delivery and Long-Term Securing of Benefits

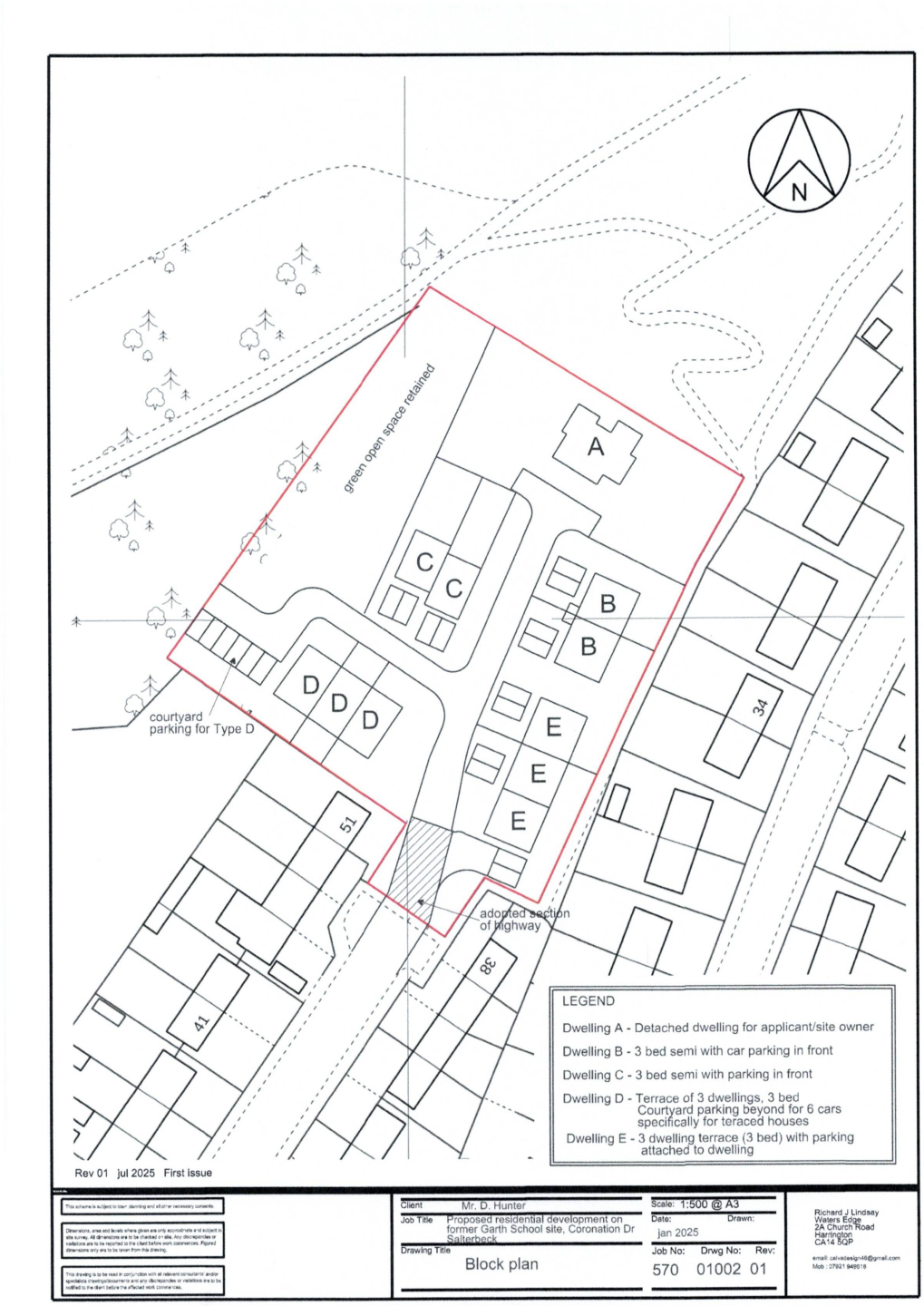
All habitat creation and long-term management commitments will be secured through an approved Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and a 30-year legal mechanism. This will be implemented either through a site management company bound by planning conditions or through a Conservation Covenant, as enabled under the Environment Act (2021).

Monitoring will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist at years 1, 5, 10, 20 and 30, with monitoring reports submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Adaptive management will be applied where monitoring indicates that target habitat conditions are not being met, ensuring that biodiversity gains are fully realised and maintained across the full 30-year period.

In summary, the proposed development delivers a policy-compliant and ecologically beneficial Biodiversity Net Gain outcome, enhancing local habitat networks and securing measurable ecological benefits in the long term.

Ends

Appendix A: Site Location Plan



Sustainable Solutions

EDuk

Environmental Design UK .com

Appendix B: Habitat Plan / UKHab Plan

Appendix C: Habitat Target Condition Descriptions

General notes
Target condition is assessed against DEFRA Metric criteria for each habitat type. Targets apply to all created or enhanced habitats and must be maintained for 30 years. Invasive non-native species are to be absent or under active control in every habitat.

Amenity / semi-natural meadow grassland (Good)
Area: as per plan (G1, G2, G3)
Time to target: within 5 years
Key attributes to evidence
• Botanical richness: at least six native forb species per m² across representative quadrats by Year 5; increasing trend thereafter.
• Sward structure: visually varied sward with flowering stems present through summer; thatch not smothering new growth.
• Negative indicators: coarse grass dominance <25% cover; injurious weeds and ruderal thickets each <5% cover.
• Bare ground and litter: bare ground <10% (except small scarified patches for diversity cycling); litter and cuttings removed after each cut.
• Management: one main hay cut in Aug–Sept with arisings removed; optional light autumn tidy cut; no fertiliser; herbicide only for spot treatment.

Rain gardens / SuDS wet meadow (Good)
Area: as per plan (RG-SuDS)
Time to target: within 3–5 years
Key attributes to evidence
• Vegetation cover and composition: persistent live cover >90% with a mix of native sedges, rushes and damp-meadow forbs; vigorous monocultures absent.
• Hydrological function: inlets/outlets intact; no blockage, scour or bank failure; no standing water beyond 48 hours after typical storm events.
• Sediment and litter: silt forebays or collection points maintained; litter removed; no hydrocarbon staining.
• Non-natives: invasive species absent; aggressive dominants actively controlled.
• Management: re-plant gaps using approved SuDS palette; desilt localised accumulations annually; inspections twice yearly and after major storms.

Broadleaved woodland creation (Good, maturing)
Area: as per plan (W1)
Time to target: canopy and understorey structure evident within 15–20 years; “Good” condition sustained thereafter

Key attributes to evidence
• Native composition: ≥80% native canopy and understorey species by stem count; non-native invasive species absent.
• Structure: developing multi-layer canopy with at least two age/height classes; canopy cover typically 30–90% depending on ride/glade design.
• Deadwood and naturalness: standing and fallen deadwood present but safe; natural regeneration visible in glades/edges.
• Browsing and damage: browsing/scar damage at levels that do not prevent recruitment of saplings; guards/stakes maintained during establishment.
• Ground flora: native shade-tolerant flora or woodland edge species present; rhododendron, snowberry and similar species absent.
• Management: failures replaced in first five years; light thinning from c. Year 8 to develop structure; no routine mowing beneath canopy other than footpath management.

Mixed scrub mosaic (Good)
Area: as per plan (S1)
Time to target: within 8–10 years
Key attributes to evidence
• Structural diversity: at least two age classes present with a mosaic of dense thicket, open patches and edge transition to grassland.
• Native dominance: ≥90% native shrub cover (e.g., hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, dog-rose, guelder-rose); non-native or ornamental shrubs absent.
• Extent and continuity: continuous scrub blocks interspersed with 10–20% glades/ride edges to provide nectar and basking habitat.
• Fruiting/flowering: seasonal nectar and fruit resources present; trimming avoids removal of all fruiting growth in any single year.
• Management: rotational cutting by thirds on a 5-year cycle; no annual flailing.

Priority ponds with wet margins (High)
Area: as per plan (P1)
Time to target: within 3–5 years
Key attributes to evidence
• Water quality and clarity: clear water column with low suspended solids; no nutrient enrichment indicators.
• Macrophytes: submerged and floating plants present; emergent/marginal vegetation 20–60% of perimeter; dominance by any one species avoided.
• Shading and buffers: combined bank shading <25%; minimum 5 m ungrazed, unfertilised buffer managed as meadow.
• Fauna indicators: aquatic macroinvertebrates present (e.g., dragonfly/damselfly larvae); amphibian use observed where suitable.

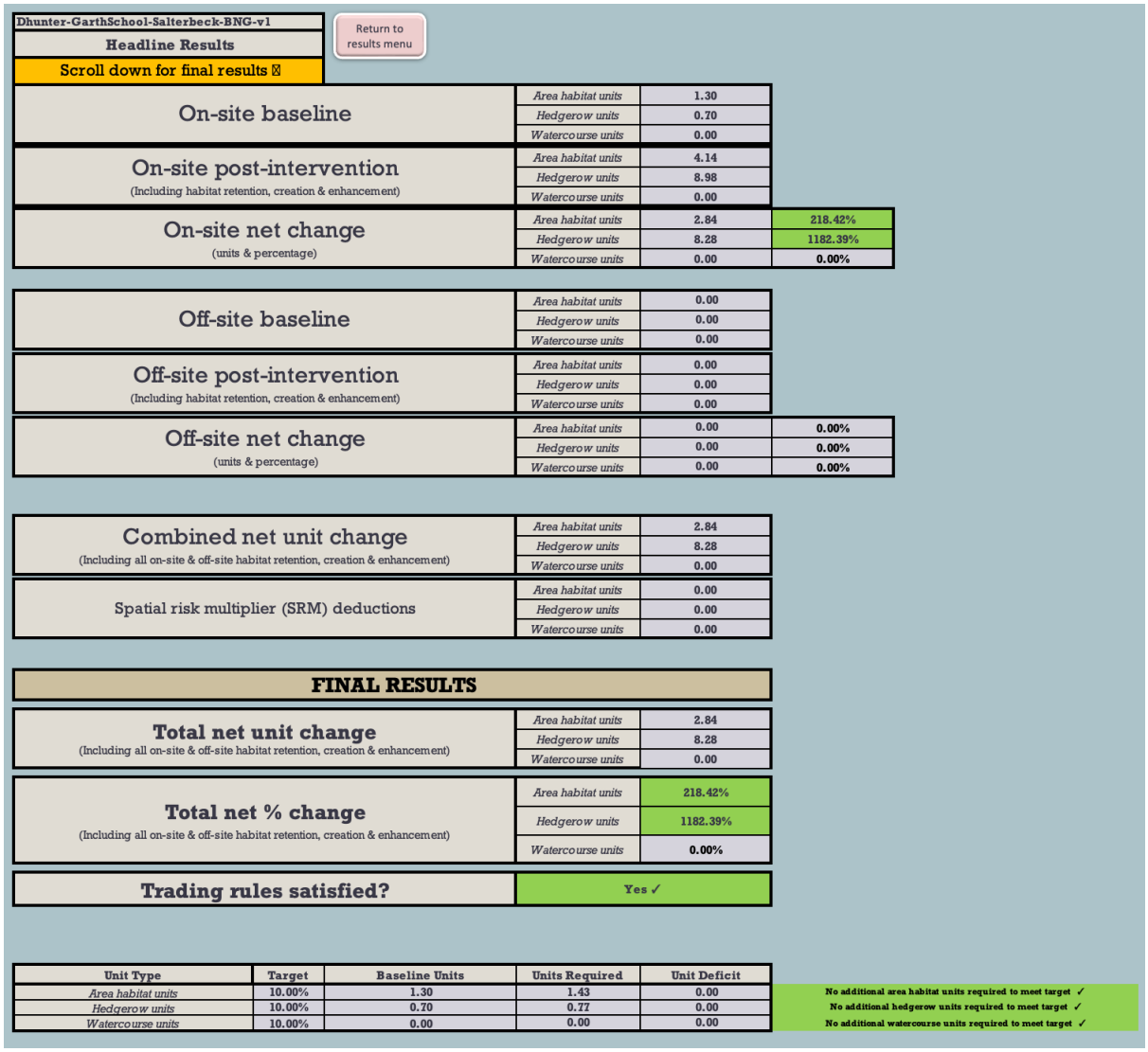
• Management: fish-free; up to one-third of marginal vegetation removed on a three-year rotation; no topping-up from treated sources; leaf litter inputs controlled.

Species-rich native hedgerow (Good)
Length: as per plan (H-C1)
Time to target: within 12 years
Key attributes to evidence (aligned to DEFRA hedgerow condition checklist)
• Height and width: average height ≥2.0 m and width ≥1.5 m along most of length.
• Gaps: continuous woody cover with gaps totalling <10% of length; no single open gap >5 m.
• Species diversity: at least five native woody species present per 30 m representative sample across the network.
• Basal structure: base not leggy; stems present to within 0.5 m of ground for >70% of length or evidence of hedge-laying/coppice cycle.
• Buffer and verge: unmanaged wildlife margin ≥1 m on at least one side, free from regular vehicle over-run or herbicide striping.
• Adjacent features: ditches, banks or trees retained where present; at least one standard tree allowed to mature every 10–15 m on selected lengths.
• Management: trimming on a 2–3 year rotation in Jan–Feb; gapping-up to maintain continuity; no flailing to the knuckle annually.

Ecologically valuable line of trees / hedgerow trees (Good)
Length: as per plan (H-C2)
Time to target: 30+ years to maturity; interim Good condition evidenced by establishment success
Key attributes to evidence
• Continuity and spacing: regular line with crown spacing typically 8–12 m; linear route legible for commuting fauna.
• Health and longevity: >85% survival at Year 1, >70% at Year 5; formative pruning completed; guards/stakes sound.
• Age and structure: mixture of young and maturing trees by Year 10; deadwood retained safely; ground beneath managed as meadow or rough grass margin.
• Lighting: no direct illumination of crowns or flight lines; spill kept <2 lux where bat movement is likely.

Verification and monitoring
• Condition will be checked by a qualified ecologist at Years 1, 5, 10, 20 and 30 using DEFRA metric checklists and photo-points.
• If any attribute falls below target, corrective actions will be specified and implemented within the next planting/management season (e.g., gapping-up, re-sowing, selective

Appendix D: DEFRA Metric Spreadsheet (v4.1)



Dhunter-GarthSchool-Salterbeck-BNG-v1

Return to results menu

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results

On-site baseline	*Area habitat units*	1.30	
	Hedgerow units	0.70	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	4.14	
	Hedgerow units	8.98	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Area habitat units*	2.84	218.42%
	Hedgerow units	8.28	1182.39%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	*Area habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	*Area habitat units*	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	2.84	
	Hedgerow units	8.28	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	*Area 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)	*Area habitat units*	2.84
	Hedgerow units	8.28
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	218.42%
	Hedgerow units	1182.39%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	1.30	1.43	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.70	0.77	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Appendix E: Planting Schedules and Seed Mix Specifications

General notes (apply to all planting)
• All stock to be UK native and of local provenance where available; biosecure supply chain.
• No peat-based composts.
• Plant during the appropriate season: November–March for trees/shrubs; March–May or August–October for seed.
• Establishment watering during first two growing seasons only; aftercare includes weed suppression, replacement of failed stock in the next planting season, and protection maintenance.
• Substitutions only on a like-for-like native basis and to be agreed with the project ecologist.

A. Amenity / semi-natural meadow grassland (Option 2 – EM1 basis)

Seed mix: Emorsgate EM1 General Purpose Meadow Mix or equal approved to suit retained topsoil.

Sowing rate: 4 g/m².
Preparation: light cultivate or scarify existing topsoil; control perennial weeds; firm and roll after sowing; no fertiliser.

Cutting regime: year 1 – cut to 50–100 mm every 6–8 weeks and remove arisings; years 2–30 – one main hay cut in Aug–Sept with arisings removed; optional light October tidy cut.

Indicative species composition (representative, adjust to supplier's EM1 data sheet)

Latin name	Common name	Typical inclusion
Agrostis capillaris	Common bent	grass component
Cynosurus cristatus	Crested dog's-tail	grass component
Festuca rubra	Red fescue	grass component
Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet vernal-grass	grass component
Leucanthemum vulgare	Oxeye daisy	wildflower
Centaurea nigra	Common knapweed	wildflower
Lotus corniculatus	Bird's-foot trefoil	wildflower
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow	wildflower

Latin name	Common name	Typical inclusion
Prunella vulgaris	Selfheal	wildflower
Ranunculus acris	Meadow buttercup	wildflower
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain	wildflower

B. SuDS rain gardens and wet meadow planting

Planting method: cell-grown plugs; install after SuDS engineering sign-off.

Densities: shelves and lows 3–5 plugs/m²; upper banks 2–3 plugs/m²; clump species in groups of 3–7.

Indicative palette

Latin name	Common name	Zone
Carex acutiformis / paniculata	Sedge spp.	low shelves and wet margins
Juncus inflexus / effusus	Hard/soft rush	wet swales and basins
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted hair-grass	upper banks
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flag iris	marginal accents (sparingly)
Caltha palustris	Marsh marigold	shallow shelves
Lychnis flos-cuculi	Ragged robin	damp meadow
Lythrum salicaria	Purple loosestrife	moist margins
Mentha aquatica	Water mint	wet edges
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowsweet	upper banks
Veronica beccabunga	Brooklime	toe of bank

Maintenance: remove litter and silt, keep inlets/outlets clear, control aggressive colonisers; no fertiliser.

C. Broadleaved woodland creation

Planting density: approximately 1,600 stems/ha at 2.5 m spacing in random groups; notch plant whips unless ground conditions require pits.

Protection: 0.6–1.2 m guards and stakes or mesh where deer/rabbit pressure occurs; mulch rings or 1.0 m² mulch mats.

Composition (by stem percentage; adjust to micro-site)

Latin name	Common name	%
Quercus robur	Pedunculate oak	20
Betula pendula/pubescens	Birch spp.	25
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	15
Acer campestre	Field maple	15
Tilia cordata	Small-leaved lime	10
Prunus avium	Wild cherry	5
Corylus avellana	Hazel (understorey)	5
Ilex aquifolium	Holly (understorey)	3
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn (edge/understorey)	2

Aftercare: replace failures in years 1–5; formative pruning where required; first light thinning from year 8–12 to develop structure; retain safe deadwood.

D. Mixed scrub mosaic

Planting density: 1.0–1.5 m centres in loose clusters; vary spacing to create thicket and open patches.

Composition

Latin name	Common name	%
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	35
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	25
Rosa canina	Dog-rose	10
Viburnum opulus	Guelder-rose	10
Corylus avellana	Hazel	10
Ulex europaeus	Gorse	10

Maintenance: rotational cutting by thirds on a roughly five-year cycle; retain fruiting growth; no annual flailing.

E. Native species-rich hedgerow (with optional standards)

Layout: double staggered rows 300–450 mm apart; 5–7 plants per linear metre.

Composition (minimum five species in any 30 m length)

Latin name	Common name	%
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	40
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	20
Corylus avellana	Hazel	10
Rosa canina	Dog-rose	10
Viburnum opulus	Guelder-rose	10
Acer campestre	Field maple	10

Hedgerow standards: one tree every 10–15 m selected from Quercus robur, Sorbus aucuparia, Betula pendula; plant 10–12 cm girth, staked and guarded.

Management: trim on a two- to three-year rotation in January–February; gap-up losses annually; maintain >90% continuous woody cover.

F. Priority habitat ponds and wet margins

Construction: varied depth profile with shallow shelves, sinuous margins, and unshaded southern aspect; no fish; 5 m unfertilised meadow buffer.

Planting approach: allow natural colonisation where appropriate; supplement with the following as plugs in groups of 3–5 at 2–3 plugs/m² on shelves:

Latin name	Common name
Potamogeton natans	Broad-leaved pondweed
Myriophyllum spicatum	Spiked water-milfoil
Nasturtium officinale	Watercress (use sparingly)
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flag iris
Mentha aquatica	Water mint
Ranunculus flammula	Lesser spearwort

Maintenance: remove up to one-third of encroaching emergent vegetation on a three-year rotation; control leaf-litter inputs; no topping-up from treated water sources.

G. Establishment and defects period

Years 0–2: watering, weed control, replacement of failures, protection maintenance, and litter removal.
Years 3–5: transition to long-term regimes; confirm survival thresholds (trees >70% at year 5; hedgerow continuity >90%).
Handover: contractor to provide as-built planting plan, plant schedules, provenance certificates, maintenance log, and defects list.

Appendix F: Management and Monitoring Template Schedule (30 Years)

Purpose
This template sets out the cyclical tasks, monitoring checkpoints, key performance indicators (KPIs) and reporting required to evidence delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain for 30 years. It may be appended to contracts and used by the management company, ecologist and contractors.

Roles and contacts
- Client / landowner: overall accountability and funding
- Management company / stewardship body: day-to-day delivery and record keeping
- Ecologist: independent monitoring, advice and sign-off at milestones
- SuDS contractor: ponds, basins, rain gardens inspection and maintenance
- Landscape contractor: establishment years, replacements, seasonal works

Annual work cycle (template)

Spring (Mar–May)
- Meadow: no fertiliser; spot-treat injurious weeds only; repair any winter damage; set out mown paths.
- SuDS: inspect inlets/outlets after storms; remove litter and silt; re-plant gaps.
- Woodland/scrub: check guards, stakes, ties; replace failed stock; mulch/top up.
- Hedgerows: gap up after winter; no cutting during bird nesting season.

Summer (Jun–Aug)
- Meadow: main hay cut late July–Aug after seed set; remove arisings.
- SuDS: control aggressive dominants; confirm no ponding >48 hours.
- Ponds: remove filamentous algae by hand if necessary; maintain 30–60% marginal cover.
- General: update incident log (fires, vandalism, fly tipping).

Autumn (Sep–Oct)
- Meadow: optional light tidy cut; rake and remove arisings.
- Trees/hedges: planting season begins; replacements and new phases.
- Scrub: rotational cut by thirds (if scheduled year).
- Ponds: remove up to one-third marginal growth on 3-year rotation.

Winter (Nov–Feb)
- Hedgerows: trim on 2–3 year cycle, Jan–Feb only; retain fruit/hip where possible.
- Woodland: formative pruning and light thinning where prescribed; retain safe deadwood.

• SuDS/ponds: structural checks; desilt forebays if required.
• Lighting check: verify no new light spill onto hedgerows/ponds.

Monitoring timetable and reporting

Milestone ecology audits
Year 1, 5, 10, 20 and 30: formal condition assessment against DEFRA metric criteria with photo-points, updated habitat maps and unit reconciliation. Provide short report to LPA within 6 weeks of each visit.

Interim checks
Annual site walkover by management company with ecologist support as needed; complete KPI checklist below and file to BNG log.

KPI checklist (use at every annual review)

Meadow (G1–G3)
• ≥6 native forb species per m² by Year 5; increasing trend thereafter
• Coarse grass dominance <25% cover
• Arisings removed; no fertiliser applied

SuDS rain gardens / swales
• Vegetation cover >90%
• Inlets/outlets clear; no standing water >48 hours
• Invasive or aggressive species absent/controlled

Woodland creation
• Survival >85% at Year 1; >70% at Year 5
• Developing multi-layer structure by Year 15
• Browsing damage not preventing recruitment

Mixed scrub
• At least two age classes visible; rotational cut maintained
• Native shrub cover ≥90%; fruiting shrubs retained

Ponds (priority habitat)
• Clear water; submerged macrophytes present
• Emergent/marginal vegetation 20–60% perimeter
• Fish absent; 5 m unfertilised buffer intact

Hedgerows
• Height ≥2.0 m, width ≥1.5 m along most lengths
• Gaps <10% total; ≥5 native species per 30 m sample
• Trimmed on 2–3 year cycle in Jan–Feb; >90% continuous cover

Corrective action workflow

1. Deviation identified via KPI or milestone audit
2. Ecologist issues written recommendation with actions, timing and responsibilities
3. Management company commissions works (e.g., re-sowing, plug planting, gapping-up, selective thinning, desilting)
4. Completion note and photos filed; follow-up check scheduled
5. Update BNG log and, if a milestone year, notify LPA of rectification

Template tables for record keeping

Annual maintenance log (one row per visit)
Date | Habitat/Area | Task completed | Quantity/extent | Contractor | Issues found | Photos saved (Y/N) | Next action/date

Planting and replacements register
Date | Habitat | Species/stock size | Quantity planted | Plot/reference | Replacement for failure? | Supplier provenance | Success check due

Incident and invasive species log
Date | Location | Issue (e.g., fly tipping, vandalism, invasive) | Immediate action taken | Follow-up action | Resolved (Y/N)

Monitoring report contents (milestone years)
• Updated habitat plan and areas/lengths
• DEFRA condition sheets and hedgerow checklist
• Photo-point index and images (repeatable locations)
• KPI summary with pass/fail table
• Corrective action plan with dates and responsibilities
• Updated unit calculation snapshot confirming compliance