LC Ecological Services

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT

PYTHOUSE FARM
TISBURY
SALISBURY
WILTSHIRE

DECEMBER 2025

ON BEHALF OF SINGLETON DESIGN

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This Biodiversity Net Gain Report, prepared by LC Ecological Services Limited, was undertaken to assess the potential to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain from the proposed construction of a PV array on land at Pythouse Farm located at Tisbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6PA. The development proposal comprises a ground mounted solar array and associated electrical enclosure on a concrete plinth.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to identify the net percentage change in biodiversity value on site, post development, and to establish whether a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be delivered in accordance with the mandatory national policy requirements.

1.3 The baseline site comprised 0.287 hectares of modified grassland and 0.003 hectares of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surfaces.

1.4 It is concluded from this assessment and the BNG metric calculation that the proposed development will result in the delivery of **+0.06 habitat units on the site which equates to a 10.47% increase in biodiversity value.** This demonstrates that the required mandatory net gain in biodiversity value for area habitat units would be achievable through proposed on-site enhancement of 0.07 hectares of poor condition modified grassland to moderate condition other neutral grassland.

1.5 To ensure the habitats created on site reach their target condition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will need to be created and implemented. The proposed habitats and features created on site will need to be managed and maintained over a minimum 30-year aftercare period, in line with the mandatory requirements.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Project brief

2.1 This Biodiversity Net Gain Report, prepared by LC Ecological Services Limited (LCES), was undertaken to assess the potential to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) from the proposed development on an area of land at Pythouse Farm located at Tisbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6PA (approximate central Grid Ref: ST 90949 28719). The development proposals comprise a ground mounted solar array and associated electrical enclosure on a concrete plinth.

2.2 This assessment is based on the site proposals as shown in appendix II.

Preparation of Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

2.2 This assessment was conducted using the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool (DEFRA, 2024).

Purpose of the report

2.3 The purpose of this report is to outline the following:

- To identify the net percentage change in biodiversity value on the site following the most recent design proposals.
- To establish whether a minimum of 10% BNG can be delivered in accordance with the mandatory national planning policy.
- To demonstrate that any biodiversity net gains can be obtained with reasonable and viable habitat creation which can be maintained on site in the long term.

3.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*' sets out the Government's policies on biodiversity, landscape, and geological conservation. Relevant paragraphs within this chapter include:

Paragraph 187: Recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services and minimise impacts on biodiversity, providing net gains in biodiversity.

Paragraph 188: Planning positively and distinguishing between the hierarchy of designated sites and allocating land with the least environmental value and maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure.

Paragraph 192: Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity by safeguarding wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks; promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and securing biodiversity net gain.

Paragraph 193: Refuse development if found to have significant harm to biodiversity; is on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is likely to have an adverse effect; if results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats. Developments with the primary objective to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be supported, while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design and can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature.

Paragraph 194: Protection to be given to potential SPA and possible SACs, proposed Ramsar sites, and sites identified or required as compensatory measures for impacts to these sites.

Paragraph 195: Considers if the development is to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

3.2 From 12th February 2024, delivery of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain became mandatory for most developments, through the Environment Act 2021. The Environment Act 2021 sets out a mandatory minimum Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% required for all Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) projects. There is also a mandatory requirement for a minimum 30-year aftercare period in which the post-intervention habitats are

managed, maintained and monitored. Small developments were required to achieve this net gain from 2nd April 2024. Current regulations and guidance have been included here for context (DLUHC, 2023):

- **The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No.8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024**: Establishes the official start date for the mandatory requirement of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for most types of new planning applications in England. It also outlines transitional provisions to ensure a smooth transition from the existing system to the new BNG requirement.

- **The Biodiversity Net Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024:** Specifies categories of development that are exempt from the BNG requirement, such as projects deemed to have minimal impact on biodiversity. This regulation aims to ensure that BNG is focused on developments that have a significant impact on the natural environment.

- **The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024:** Amends existing planning regulations to incorporate provisions related to BNG, including requirements for planning applications, Biodiversity Gain Plans, and phased developments. This regulation aims to streamline the delivery of BNG and ensure it is effectively integrated into the planning process.

3.3 The Wiltshire Local Plan is currently being developed with expected adoption in the 2nd quarter of 2026. The Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015) will be applicable to any planning applications for the site.

3.4 Advice administered by Wiltshire Council adheres to government guidance and requires a mandatory delivery of at least 10% net gain on site.

4.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Study Area

4.1 The application site is 0.29 hectares in size and located at central Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference ST 90949 28719 (refer to appendix I).

Sources of information

4.2 The initial walkover habitat survey was undertaken by assistant ecologist Dr Will Barrop on the 7th October 2025. The habitats present were classified according to the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHABS, 2023) methods and criteria for this assessment.

4.3 The habitat survey recorded the habitat types across the site with a record made of the botanical interest in each area. A condition assessment was then conducted using the data obtained from this survey.

4.4 The BNG Metric was completed by David Caplin BSc. (Hons.), MSc. David provides expertise in land management and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). He has run training courses for ecologists in the use of GIS in conservation. He has gained experience in BNG in the last year and a half, and is developing further experience with BNG, including new workflows and data accountability.

4.5 The following guidance was used:

- The UK Habitat Classification v2.0 (UKHab, 2023).
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan, Priority Habitat Descriptions (JNCC, 2018)
- The Statutory Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric). User Guide (Defra, 2024)
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment methodology (Defra, 2024).

4.6 Habitats recorded on site were transposed into a digital map using QGIS coordinate referencing system OSGB 1936/ British National Grid.

4.7 Habitats recorded on site were measured using the derived areas (Ellisoidial – EPSG 7001) and all habitat areas are provided in hectares. Linear features were measured using the derived length (Ellisoidial – EPSG 7001) and the measurements provided in kilometres.

Limitations

4.8 Whilst every effort has been made to accurately map the habitats on site there may be discrepancies associated with the projected coordinate reference system. However, the National Grid transformation is considered to be the most accurate with an accuracy level of less than 1 metre.

4.9 The botanical survey was undertaken in October 2025, which is just outside of the optimal botanical survey period. It is therefore possible that some plant species may have been missed, although it is not considered to be a significant limitation given the very common and widespread habitat types that were present on the site, and the majority of the plant species likely to be present were recorded.

4.10 The condition assessment was undertaken based on the results of the botanical survey. The condition can only be determined on the day of the survey. Some of the criteria associated with the condition of the habitats could change such as sward height, physical damage, bare ground, and cover of undesirable species, and thus impacting the overall score if assessed at a different time of the year.

5.0 BASELINE

Habitats

5.1 The site was approximately 0.29 hectares in total area, and it formed part of an active chicken farm. It consisted of part of a field used for rearing free range chickens. The on-site habitats comprised an area of species-poor modified grassland and various artificial unvegetated, unsealed surfaces. The site was surrounded by further pasture fields for chicken rearing, farm buildings, and a semi-natural woodland stand to the north and west.

5.2 The baseline habitats recorded on site are summarised in full below and a baseline habitat map of the site is included in appendix III. Photos of the habitats are included in appendix IV. The relevant habitat condition assessment sheets are included in appendix V.

g4 modified grassland

5.3 A species-poor modified grassland was recorded over most of the site including the proposed location of the solar array. The sward was relatively short, with an average height range of 0.5 to 5 centimetres, and there were some localised areas of tall forbs. An average of 15% bare ground cover was recorded and is believed to be poaching damage caused by the activities of the chickens. The sward was recorded as having a very high percentage cover of grasses (>95%), it contained some thatch, and on average comprised three vascular plant species per metre^2. The sward consisted of locally dominant to frequent creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), locally abundant to frequent Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lantana*), locally frequent to occasional common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), occasional white clover (*Trifolium repens*), locally occasional to rare perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), and rare pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), white dead-nettle (*Lamium album*), knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius)*, red campion (*Silene dioica*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) and thyme-leaved speedwell (*Veronica serpyllifolia*). All the species recorded are common and widespread in the UK. No invasive non-native vascular plant species were identified in the grassland.

5.4 The baseline condition score was assessed as 'Poor'. This was due to the low species counts per metre^2.

u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

5.5 Areas of almost entirely unvegetated gravel, cobble and bare soil were recorded in a small strip of land in the south of the plot. The bare ground in these areas was thought to be due to a combination of the substrates and the intense activity of chickens due to its proximity to the chicken coop. The very limited vegetation consisted of rare creeping bent, soft rush and common nettle.

Summary of baseline value

5.6 The overall baseline value of the habitats present within the development boundary was 0.57 habitat units. Table 1 below provides a summary breakdown of the baseline habitat values within the site boundary.

Table 1: Summary of baseline habitat values

Habitat types	**Area (ha)**	**Distinctiveness level**	**Condition scores**	**Habitat value (units)**
Modified grassland	0.287	Low	Poor	0.57
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.003	V. Low	NA/Other	0
Total area habitat values	**0.29**			**0.57**

6.0 BNG GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT

6.1 As part of the BNG process there are ten good practice principles that help to achieve BNG if they are followed. Each principle is described below and how the project has addressed each principle.

Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy

6.2 The design of the development has tried to utilise the mitigation hierarchy by avoidance to any adverse impacts on habitats and species on site.

6.3 Species recorded on site are considered to be of low to moderate ecological value, and no priority habitats were recorded.

6.4 The development has not resulted in any adverse impacts by following the mitigation hierarchy.

Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere

6.5 Habitats which are considered 'irreplaceable' are those which would be technically difficult to recreate, replace, or restore once destroyed. Habitats such as ancient woodland and veteran trees are considered irreplaceable due to the time it takes to reach such condition. Irreplaceable habitat includes factors which contribute to the condition of that habitat including age, environmental context, achievability to recreate and its geographical position within the landscape.

6.6 The site does not support any habitats of principal importance.

Be inclusive and equitable

6.7 Discussions have been had and shared to demonstrate how the design can achieve a better outcome for BNG.

Address risks

6.8 All habitats have been calculated within the red line boundary, including habitats within the development footprint. No additional land for the construction phase and site compounds has been included within the calculator.

6.9 Habitats to be created will be done so by appointed contractors who have experience in habitat creation, with the guidance of the appointed ecologist.

Make a measurable Net Gain contribution

6.10 The proposed development has been measured against The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The development has reduced its overall impact throughout the design of the scheme where possible.

6.11 The proposed on-site ecologically enhanced neutral grassland will be managed for biodiversity and will directly contribute towards nature conservation.

Achieving the best outcomes for biodiversity

6.12 The development proposals impact grassland of low ecological value yet will result in the creation of grassland with medium distinctiveness.

Additional enhancements

6.13 The proposal is for a solar array that will generate sustainable electricity, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and contribute to the national net-zero target.

Create a Net Gain legacy

6.14 Long-term benefit to biodiversity will be able to be monitored through habitat management.

Optimise sustainability

6.15 The landscaping plan for the development aims to be as sustainable as possible, providing net-gain through habitat creation.

Be transparent

6.16 Through the progression of the development the design team and client have all been made aware of the communications and outcomes of the BNG.

7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The proposed development will result in the small-scale loss of modified grassland and artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface to facilitate the construction of the ground mounted solar array and associated electrical enclosure on a concrete plinth. The proposals aim to minimise the loss of biodiversity and achieve the best result in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain through the application of the mitigation hierarchy. Table 2 below provides a summary of the habitat losses that will result from the development proposal.

Table 2: Habitat units retained and lost.

Habitat type	Baseline area (ha)	Area retained (ha)	Area habitat lost in the application area (ha)	Biodiversity Units lost
Area habitats				
Modified grassland	0.287	0.1	0.12	0.23
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.003	0.002	0.001	0
Area total	**0.29**	**0.10**	**0.12**	**0.23**

7.2 0.12 hectares of modified grassland will be lost due to these proposals, equating to 0.23 habitat units.

Proposed on-site habitat creation

7.3 The proposals include the enhancement of 0.07 hectares of poor condition modified grassland to moderate condition other neutral grassland. A plan showing the proposed post-intervention habitat layout for the site has been provided in appendix VI. This on-site habitat enhancement will provide 0.43 habitat units.

7.4 **Overall, there will be a net gain in biodiversity value of <u>+0.06 habitat units on the site which equates to +10.47%.</u>**

7.5 The current proposals meet the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain score required for habitats on site.

7.6 Figure 1, below, shows the final BNG metric calculation results as the outcome of the proposals, demonstrating that the required mandatory net gain in biodiversity value for habitat units has been met.

Figure 1: Headline results from the statutory metric calculation

Headline Results

Return to results menu

Scroll down for final results ⚠

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.57	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.63	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.06	10.47%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	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%

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.06
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	10.47%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.57	0.63	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	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 ✓

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 It is concluded from this assessment and the accompanying BNG metric calculation that the proposed development will deliver an overall gain in biodiversity value of **+0.06 area habitat units for the site which equates to +10.47%. This demonstrates that the required mandatory net gain in biodiversity value for habitat units will be met.**

8.2 To ensure the habitats created reach their target condition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will need to be created and implemented. The proposed habitats and features created on site will need to be managed and maintained over a minimum 30-year aftercare period, in line with the mandatory requirements.

9.0 REFERENCES

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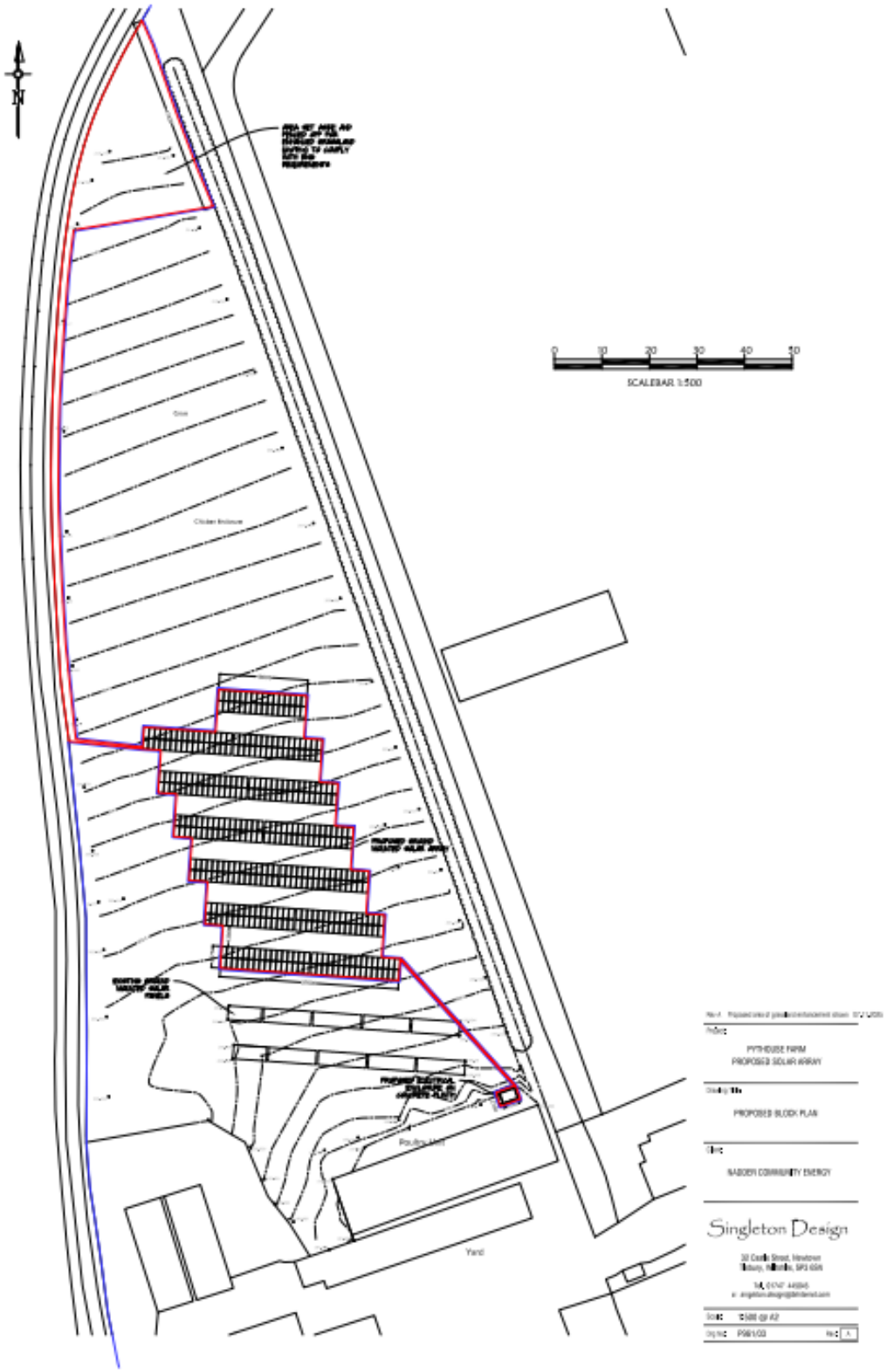
APPENDIX I: Site Location Plan

APPENDIX II: Proposed Site Plan



APPENDIX III: Baseline Habitats

APPENDIX IV: Site Photographs (October 2025)

Photo 1: A view facing north with the proposed location of the solar array in the foreground.	**Photo 2:** A view facing south with the proposed grassland enhancement area in the foreground.
Photo 3: An example close-up view of the species-poor g4 grassland.	**Photo 4:** A view facing northwest with the artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface and approximate location of the proposed electrical enclosure in the foreground.

APPENDIX V: Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Modified Grassland

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	Pythouse Farm	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	Will Barrop
Limitations (if applicable)	The survey was conducted in early October so just outside of the optimal survey period. However, the habitat type was common and widespread, and it is considered the majority of the plant species likely to be present were recorded.	**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	NA
Grid reference	ST 90949 28719	**Habitat parcel reference**	NA
Habitat Description			
Species poor modified grassland that was recorded on a majority of the site.			
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.** 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**	There was an average of three vascular plant species present per metre^2.

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**	The sward was fairly uniform with an average height of 0.5-5cm. Less than 20% of the sward was taller than 7cm.
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). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	**Yes**	No scrub was identified within the grassland area.
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.	**No**	Approximately 15% of the grassland area was bare ground caused by the activities of free-ranging chickens.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].	**No**	An estimated average of 15% of the grassland area was bare ground caused by chicken poaching damage.
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.	**Yes**	No bracken was recorded on site.
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).	**Yes**	No non-native plant species were recorded in the grassland.
	Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		**No**
	Number of criteria passed		**3**

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

NA

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).

APPENDIX VI: Proposed Habitats