

Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and Assessment

Land at Eastern Way, Melksham,
Wiltshire - Lidl

09 January 2026

Ecology
Arboriculture
Land Management





Report Details

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Report Reference	3074-BNG-AG

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V1	09 January 2026	Anna Galvin BSc MSc	Matthew Davey BSc MSc MCIEEM	Matthew Davey BSc MSc MCIEEM	

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Site Details

Site Name and Location	Land at Eastern Way, Melksham, Wiltshire - Lidl
Central OS Grid Reference	ST 92231 64257
Client	Lidl

Boundary





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1 Introduction

This report provides a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and Assessment for Land at Eastern Way, Melksham, Wiltshire - Lidl in relation to a detailed planning application. The surveys were commissioned by Lidl.

The area within the application boundary is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'. Following commencement of surveys the Site boundary changed and as such some assumptions have been necessary given this was out of season for botanical surveys. This is referred to below, where relevant.

Further details can be found within the Ecological Impact Assessment (GE Consulting, 2026).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was initially and meets the requirements of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The Environment Act (2021) requires most planning applications in England to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

1.1 Site Context

The Site is located directly parallel to Eastern Way in Melksham. Surrounding land use includes residential development to the west and agricultural fields to the north, south and east of the Site.

1.2 Description of Proposed Development

Proposals consist of the establishment of a Lidl unit with associated access, car parking and soft landscaping.

1.3 Aims

The aims of this report are to:

-  Provide the national mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain information requirements.
-  Provide the site baseline and an indicative post-development BNG assessment.

2 BNG Statement

2.1 National Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Information

Table 1 provides the BNG information required to support the planning application under Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Table 1: National Mandatory Baseline BNG Information

Information required	Description	
Would the planning permission, if granted, be subject to the biodiversity gain condition?	Yes – meets criteria of a major development.	
Pre-development biodiversity value of the on-Site habitat on the date of application	Habitats	8.63 ¹
	Hedgerows	3.12
	Watercourses	0.00
Publication date of the biodiversity metric calculation tool used	July 2024	
Is an earlier date proposed?	No – the relevant date is the date of the planning application submission.	
Is there any evidence of habitat degradation?	No – there is no evidence of any unauthorised habitat degradation since the statutory cut-off date of 30 January 2020.	
Is there any irreplaceable habitat on Site?	No – there is no irreplaceable habitat within the Site boundary.	
Plan of on-Site habitat on the date of the application (or earlier date)	Refer to Figure 1 .	

2.2 'Significant' Net Gain

What counts as 'significant' habitat enhancement varies depending on the scale of development and existing habitat. Based on the Proposed Landscape Plan (CA-20250MLK-04, Corscadden Associates), the following 'significant' on-site habitat enhancements, as defined by Government guidance, are predicted as detailed on **Figure 2**:

-  **Habitats of medium or higher distinctiveness:** native species-rich hedgerows, mixed scrub, other neutral grassland (precautionarily assumed habitat, to be confirmed following a summer survey) and individual trees (all medium distinctiveness).

¹ As detailed in the introduction the site boundary was extended and as such the habitats fringing the Site have been assumed on a precautionary basis. Accordingly, the habitat units may change following a summer grassland survey (although given the assumptions are precautionary it is very unlikely the units would increase).

- 🦋 **Habitat creation or enhancement where distinctiveness is increased relative to the distinctiveness of the habitat before development:** areas of modified grassland to be enhanced to other neutral grassland.
- 🦋 **Enhancements to habitat condition, for example from poor or moderate to good:** enhancement of native hedgerow with trees to species-rich native hedgerow with trees.

Therefore, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will be required.

2.3 Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

The biodiversity gain hierarchy has been followed during the design process as per **Table 2**.

Table 2: Application of the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

Step in the hierarchy	Application
<i>First, in relation to onsite habitats which have a medium, high and very high distinctiveness, the avoidance of adverse effects from the development and, if they cannot be avoided, the mitigation of those effects</i>	Medium distinctiveness other neutral grassland (assumed, as detailed further above) requires removal to facilitate pedestrian access to and from the Site in the form of footpaths. Given the requirement to provide pedestrian access there is no alternative to its removal. All trees on Site are to be retained and RPAs to be suitably buffered. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated. A native hedgerow with trees is present to the northeast of the Site. This hedgerow is to be retained and no impacts are anticipated.
<i>Then, in relation to all onsite habitats which are adversely affected by the development, the adverse effect should be compensated by prioritising in order, where possible, the enhancement of existing onsite habitats, creation of new onsite habitats, allocation of registered offsite gains and finally the purchase of biodiversity credits</i>	The majority of modified grassland is anticipated to be removed, however some areas to the east and north of the Site are proposed to be enhanced to other neutral grassland in order to compensate for the loss of habitats. Creation of mixed scrub, other neutral grassland, introduced shrub and tree planting is also anticipated to help compensate for the loss of habitats on Site. It is expected that a habitat bank will be utilised to offset the losses.

3 BNG Assessment Summary

A baseline and indicative post-development BNG assessment was undertaken using the statutory biodiversity metric (released in July 2024 and downloaded directly from the Government website² on 8 January 2026) following current guidance (Defra, 2024a). Further detail on the methodology is provided in **Appendix 1**.

The on-site baseline and indicative post-development BNG position are demonstrated in **Table 3**. Full details of the calculations are provided in the statutory metric calculation tool (GE Consulting, 2026). Condition assessments are provided in **Appendix 3**. Baseline and indicative post-development BNG plans are presented in **Figures 1** and **2**.

Table 3: Summary of on-Site BNG Metric Assessment

Unit Type	Onsite Baseline Units	Onsite Post-development Units	Net Unit Change	% Change
Habitat	8.63	7.09	-1.54	- 17.89%
Hedgerow/ Linear	3.12	5.05	+1.93	+ 61.97%
Watercourse	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The indicative assessment indicates that the minimum 10% net gain requirement will not be achievable on-site. It is anticipated that a habitat bank will be used to gain the required habitat units. This will take into account current trading errors within the metric, which will be resolved through the purchase of units of the same broad habitat type or higher distinctiveness habitat to adequately compensate all habitat loss. The BNG will be updated should any changes in the landscaping proposals occur.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

4 References

Defra (2024a) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology July 2024. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>.

Defra (2024b) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide July 2025. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>.

GE Consulting (2026) 3074-EclA-AG – Ecological Impact Assessment - Land at Eastern Way, Melksham – Lidl 07.01.26

JNCC (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit*. JNCC, Peterborough, ISBN 0 86139 636 7.

UKHab Ltd (2023) *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*. Available from: <https://www.ukhab.org>.



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Native Hedgerow
- Native Hedgerow with trees
- Rural Tree (Broadleaved)
- Urban Tree (Broadleaved)
- g3c - Other neutral grassland
- g4 - Modified grassland
- u1b - Developed land, sealed surface

Due to a change in the Site boundary, the grassland verge parallel to Eastern Way (F2) and trees to the south of the Site (T22-T25) were not surveyed during the initial Site Walkover Survey. Therefore, a precautionary approach has been used in assigning the habitats classification and likely condition given the current use/management. Satellite imagery was also used in assigning tree size and species.

Plan Not to Scale

Imagery ©2026 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2026 Google

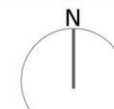
Figure 1:
On-Site Baseline Habitat Plan

Project:
Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lidl

Client:
Lidl

Date:
9/1/2026
Ref:
3074-BNG-F1

Drawn:
AG
Revision:
-





Key:

- Site Boundary
- Native Hedgerow
- Native Species Rich Hedgerow
- Native Species Rich Hedgerow with trees
- New Urban Tree (Broadleaved)
- Retained Rural Tree (Broadleaved)
- Retained Urban Tree (Broadleaved)
- X 1160 - Introduced shrub
- g3c - Other neutral grassland
- g4 - Modified grassland
- h3h - Mixed scrub
- u1b - Developed land. sealed surface
- 'Significant' net gain

Plan Not to Scale

Imagery ©2026 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2026 Google

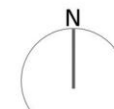
Figure 2:
On-site Post-intervention Proposed Habitat Plan

Project:
Land at Eastern Way, Melksham - Lidl

Client:
Lidl

Date:
9/1/2026
Ref:
3074-BNG-F2

Drawn:
AG
Revision:
-



Appendix 1 – General Glossary of Terms

Annex I	Threatened bird listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive/ Habitats listed on Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive
Annex II	Species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of SACs
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BMCL	Bat Mitigation Class Licence
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BoCC	Bird of Conservation Concern
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CWS	County Wildlife Site
DBW	Daytime Bat Walkover
EclA	Ecological Impact Assessment
EPS	European Protected Species
GLTA	Ground Level Tree Assessment
HPI	Habitat of Principal Importance required under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
HMMP	Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
GCN	Great crested newt
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LEMP	Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MMU	Minimum Mapping Unit
NBW	Night-time Bat Walkover
NE	Natural England
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NVA	Night Vision Aid
NVC	National Vegetation Classification Survey

OSWI	Other Site of Wildlife Interest
pCWS	Potential County Wildlife Site
POS	Public Open Space
PRA	Preliminary Roost Assessment
PRF	Potential Roost Feature
Ramsar	A wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention
RPA	Root Protection Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPI	Species of Principal Importance required under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UKHAB	UK Habitat Classification
UWS	Unconfirmed Wildlife Site
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended)
ZOI	Zone of Influence

Appendix 2 – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Methodology

Site Survey and Condition Assessment

The Site was surveyed by Anna Galvin BSc MSc on 05 June, comprising a UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey (UKHab Ltd. 2023, V2.0) and condition assessment following the criteria in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (Defra, 2024a). See **Appendix 3** for the condition assessment sheets and the EclA (GE Consulting, 2025) for details of the UKHab survey. An update survey was undertaken by Anna Galvin BSc MSc on 02 December 2025 to confirm current on-site conditions.

All habitats within the Site were identified, described and mapped during the field survey in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) (UKHab Ltd., 2023 (V2.0)) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2024b) classifications for hedgerows, with other linear and point features mapped using Phase 1 Habitat Survey symbology (JNCC 2010). Primary habitats have been mapped to a minimum mapping unit (MMU) of 25m², although where features of note of a smaller scale are present, these have also been recorded and mapped.

Any habitats (e.g. traditional orchard) with no appropriate primary habitat label were assigned a secondary habitat code. Other secondary UKHab codes were recorded where relevant, although they are described qualitatively within this report for ease of reading.

Ditches were classified in accordance with best practice, i.e. if considered likely to hold water for <4 months of the year, they were considered to be dry and as such are not included as a ditch within the BNG assessment (Defra, 2024b).

Biodiversity Metric Methodology

The BNG assessment was undertaken as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Defra 2024a) using a copy of the statutory Defra metric downloaded directly from the Government website³ on 08 January 2025.

The habitats identified during the walkover survey were compared to current and historic satellite imagery (including Google Earth Pro and Google Maps) to assess whether degradation has occurred between 30 January 2020 and the date of the survey. Where degradation has occurred in this timeframe, the habitats on Site immediately prior to the degradation was used as the baseline for the Site in line with government guidance.

The Site was divided up into distinct habitat parcels and linear features based on UKHab and Statutory Biodiversity Metric classifications and measured accordingly using the QGIS mapping tool. Where appropriate, individual trees that have been included within the metric calculations are represented using point symbols superimposed over area habitats. Their area has been calculated and included within the metric as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Defra, 2024a), with tree size informed by the diameter at breast height (DBH) information in the Arboricultural Survey Report (ref 3074-ACOP-JP). All condition criteria information for all habitats for which a condition assessment is required is included in **Appendix 3**.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

The area of each habitat to be created, retained, and/or enhanced, measured from the Landscape Plan in QGIS, was entered into the metric. These were then each given an appropriate target condition and strategic significance score.

The baseline BNG plan is shown in **Figure 1** and the indicative post-development BNG plan is shown in **Figure 2**.

Strategic Significance

The strategic significance score represents the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type and is considered separately for each individual habitat. The value is determined by referring to the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Where this has not yet been published, Local Planning Authority (LPA) biodiversity and green infrastructure strategies that apply to the site have been referred to.

The Site location falls within the area covered by the Wiltshire LNRS, however, it is not within a focus area for nature recovery and so all habitats were considered to have Low strategic significance.

Biodiversity Metric Principles

The Biodiversity Metric Principles have informed the assessment as per **Table 1.1**:

Table 1.1: Application of the Biodiversity Metric Principles

Principle	Application
<i>Principle 1 - The metric assessment should be completed by a competent person</i>	The metric was completed by an ecologist trained and experienced in the use of the metric.
<i>Principle 2 - The use of this biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirements. This includes consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands</i>	All other legislative and policy requirements have been met. See the EclA for further details (GE Consulting, 2026)
<i>Principle 3 - This biodiversity metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidance and professional codes</i>	The latest User Guide and good practice guidance (including information within Planning Practice Guidance) has been followed.
<i>Principle 4 - This biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice</i>	An EclA has been produced taking into account all other ecological considerations on site.
<i>Principle 5 - Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values</i>	An EclA has been produced taking into account all other ecological considerations on site and the requirements for species have been incorporated into the design.
<i>Principle 6 - This biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance</i>	An EclA has been produced taking into account all ecological considerations on site, including local requirements using survey and desk study data, with the metric used to show how habitat creation and enhancement is contributing to providing an uplift in biodiversity value of the Site, as required by the Environment Act.

Principle	Application
<i>Principle 7 - Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe</i>	The habitats proposed to be enhanced/ created have been specified based on site specific circumstances, including how these will likely be utilised and managed in the future. As such a precautionary approach has been taken to suggesting habitats to be created post-development and condition assessment.
<i>Principle 8 - Created and enhanced habitats should be, where practical and reasonable, local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation</i>	All habitat creation is taking place within the development site.
<i>Principle 9 - This biodiversity metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. Proposals should aim to:</i> - maintain habitat extent - supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks - ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function	Proposed habitats have been designed to link to existing landscape features, such as hedgerows and other neutral grassland, to enhance existing ecological networks and to maintain ecologically functional areas for species e.g. bat foraging and commuting.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made to complete the calculations:

- 👉 A change to the red line boundary resulted in the grassland verge parallel to Eastern Way not being included within the Site Walkover Survey. Due to time restrictions an additional walkover survey was not possible. Therefore, to ensure that the habitats were not undervalued, where appropriate the highest distinctiveness habitat type and best possible condition considered likely to be present were used, given the current use/management. This method was applied to the grassland and trees present, along with using satellite imagery to determine tree size and species. The grassland could be reassessed during the optimal period (summer) to confirm classification and condition and as such the baseline habitat units may change
- 👉 The retention and enhancement of the modified grassland to the north and east of the Site, the retention and enhancement of hedgerows H2 and H1c
- 👉 The retention and protection of the majority of the other neutral grassland verge (F2)
- 👉 The retention of all trees on Site
- 👉 The above retained habitats are all assumed to be appropriately protected during construction
- 👉 A 2-year delay in habitat creation and enhancement was assumed across the Site
- 👉 The degradation of sections of H1 (H1a and H1b) have been recorded as loss and then recreated in advance by 30 years in the Metric, which is in line with best practice (Defra, 2024b).

Limitations

There were no limitations associated with the site survey or baseline BNG calculations.

Off-Setting

It is anticipated that a habitat bank will be utilised to compensate for the deficit in biodiversity units.



Appendix 3 – Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Table 2.1: Condition Assessment of Low Distinctiveness Grassland

Parcel /Feature Reference	Condition Criteria							Total score and Condition
	A - There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs. This criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	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).	C - Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total 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.	E - Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	F - Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	G - There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	
F1	Fail	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	5/7
	The average number of plant species per m ² was 5 including perennial rye grass, Yorkshire fog, crested dog's tail, false oat and meadow buttercup. The sward was very grass dominated with only a few forbs present.	Sward height was uniform across the whole field.	No scrub was present	No physical damage present.	Bare ground c.5%	No bracken present.	No non-native plant species were recorded on Site.	Poor Condition



Table 2.2: Condition Assessment of Hedgerow

Condition Criteria	H1	H2	H3	H7
A1 - >1.5 m average height along length	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
A2 - >1.5 m average width along length	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass
B1 - Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	Pass	Fail	Fail	Pass
B2 - Gaps make up <10% of total length; and no canopy gaps >5 m	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
C1 - >1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
C2 - Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail
D1 - >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
D2 - >90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Only applies to hedgerows with trees E1 - There is more than one age-class of tree present and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow	N/A	Fail	N/A	N/A
Only applies to hedgerows with trees E2 - At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity	N/A	Pass	N/A	N/A
Notes	5m width and 3m height, ground flora consists of nettles and cleavers.	Hedgerow with trees bounded adjacent offsite property. 0.5m width and 4m height. Ground flora consists of nettles, cleavers and ivy.	1.5m width and 1.5m height. Tightly managed hedgerow. Ground flora consists of cleavers, nettle and dock.	5m width and 3m height, ground flora consists of nettles and cleavers.
Final score	7/8	6/10	6/8	7/8
Final condition	Good Condition	Moderate Condition	Good Condition	Good Condition



Table 2.3: Condition Assessment of Individual Trees

Parcel /Feature Reference	Condition Criteria						Parcel Condition
	A - The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	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).	C - The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	D - There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities. And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	E - Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	F - More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	
G1	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	4/6
	All trees are field maples.		Young trees.		None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
G3	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	4/6
	Lime		Young trees.	No evidence of adverse management.	None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
G6	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	4/6
	Ash		Young trees.	No evidence of adverse management.	None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
G7	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	4/6
	Cherry		Young trees.	No evidence of adverse management.	None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
T22	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	3/6
	<i>Carpinus sp</i>		Young tree.	No evidence of adverse management.	None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
T23	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	3/6
	<i>Carpinus sp</i>		Young tree.	No evidence of adverse management.	None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
T24	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	3/6
	<i>Carpinus sp</i>		Young tree.	No evidence of adverse management.	None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
T25	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	3/6
	<i>Carpinus sp</i>		Young tree.	No evidence of adverse management.	None recorded.	Oversailing grassland on roadside verge.	Moderate Condition
T16	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	6/6
	Oak sp.		Early mature.	No evidence of adverse management.	Cavities present.	Oversailing agricultural fields.	Good Condition

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