

Redwood Hub, Edgar Wood Academy, Heywood Old Road, Heywood OL10 2QN

ASSESSMENT OF BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

September 2025

ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd Reference: 2025-318

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Document Control

Survey Type:	Surveyors	Survey Date(s)
UK Habitat Classification Survey (including Condition Assessments of habitats)	Amy Sharples B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. ACIEEM	19 th September 2025
Reporting	Personnel	Date
Author	Amy Sharples B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. ACIEEM Senior Ecologist	26 th September 2025
Signature(s)		
Checked by	Rebecca Bayley B.Sc. (Hons) Graduate Ecologist	26 th September 2025
Revised and issued by	Amy Sharples	30 th September 2025
Report issued to	LeaHough Chartered Surveyors	
Version Number	1	
Metric Version	Statutory Metric version 1.0.4 of the metric published 3 rd July 2025	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

- 1.1.1 ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd was commissioned by LeaHough Chartered Surveyors to carry out an assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) at the area associated with the Redwood Hub, Edgar Wood Academy, Heywood Old Road, Heywood OL10 2QN (hereafter the 'site'). The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SD 85227 07387.
- 1.1.2 The assessment was requested in connection with a planning application proposing the planning application to extend the existing school building and car park.
- 1.1.3 This BNG assessment has been prepared to provide an assessment of the biodiversity value of the baseline of the site, an assessment of the value of post-development habitats based on the site proposals and landscape strategy, and provides guidance in relation to the requirements to attain a net gain in accordance with *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, 2016).
- 1.1.4 This report also advises on how compliance with Chapter 15, paragraph 193(d) of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024)¹ can be achieved, which states '*opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate*'.

1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 An aerial image of the site is appended at **Figure 1**.
- 1.2.2 The total site area is **0.1482 hectares²**.
- 1.2.3 The habitats present within the site are described and assessed in *2025-318 Redwood Hub, Edgar Wood Academy, Heywood Old Road, Heywood OL10 2QN, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd, 2025), hereafter referred to as the 'ecology report'.
- 1.2.4 A summary of the habitats present within the site is presented at **Section 3.1** of this report.

1.3 Proposed Development Description

- 1.3.1 The assessment has been requested to inform a planning application for the extension of the existing school building and car park. The proposals are presented at *BS.25-077-P-03 - Redwood Hub - Proposed Site Plan* (LeaHough Chartered Surveyors, 2025), hereafter the 'proposals plan'.

1.4 Scope of Study

- 1.4.1 This report has been prepared to accompany a completed assessment of BNG using *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool* (Natural England, 2023). The completed Microsoft Excel spreadsheet

¹ Hereafter the NPPF

² As measured by ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd; detail on the methods used to measure the area of the site are presented at **Section 2.0**. It has been considered suitable in this instance to measure the area habitats in hectares to four decimal places (i.e. to a m² level of accuracy).

assessment is presented as a separate document, named 'ERAP Ltd 2025-318 Statutory Metric, Redwood Hub 26.09.25', hereafter referred to as the 'BNG Metric'.

- 1.4.2 It is intended that this report provides a transparent assessment to demonstrate the calculation of net gain, based on the reasonable parameters assumed for the proposals (refer to **Section 2.3**). This approach has been applied on a number of other sites ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd has assisted with and has been accepted by the relevant Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and their ecological advisors to enable a planning application to progress.

2.0 METHOD OF SURVEY

2.1 Habitat Assessment and Mapping

Baseline Habitats

- 2.1.1 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey including an assessment in accordance with the UKHab and condition assessments of the habitats present was carried out by Amy Sharples B.Sc. (Hons) M. Sc. ACIEEM on 19th September 2025. The weather was overcast with a light breeze (Beaufort scale 2) and an air temperature of 16°C.
- 2.1.2 On site habitat mapping was assisted via use of GPS technology and QField on-site mapping software, using *BS.25-077-P-01 - Redwood Hub - Location Plan* (LeaHough Chartered Surveyors, 2025) and *ESRI World Imagery* as base plans. This plan has been provided to ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd without spatial referencing; the plan has been inputted into QGIS and an affine transformation completed to ensure it is accurate in accordance with *ESRI World Imagery*.
- 2.1.3 Each of the habitats within the site has been assessed in accordance with the UKHab to determine each habitat type present. This has allowed a reliable classification of habitats in accordance with those used by the BNG Metric.
- 2.1.4 The UKHab has been designed to function at two scales: fine scale (25m² or 5 metres length) and large scale (400m² or 20m² length). It has been considered for the purposes of this survey (where the UKHab has been used to inform the BNG calculation of a relatively small area) that a finer scale of 5m² is appropriate for the classification of habitats.
- 2.1.5 A plan showing the baseline habitats present within the site in accordance with UKHab symbology is appended at **Figure 2**.
- 2.1.6 Condition Assessments for each of the habitats present within the site have been completed in accordance with *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology* (Natural England, November 2023) and are appended at **Section 7.2**.

Post-development Habitats

- 2.1.7 The post development habitats have been calculated using the proposals plan. This plan has been provided to ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd without spatial referencing; the plan has been inputted into QGIS and an affine transformation completed to ensure it is accurate in accordance with *ESRI World Imagery*.

- 2.1.8 A plan showing the proposed habitats in accordance with UKHab symbology is appended at **Figure 3** and target condition assessments for each of the proposed habitats are appended at **Section 7.3**.

2.2 Survey and Reporting Limitations

- 2.2.1 All measurements have been either estimated whilst on site or measured using QGIS.

2.3 Evaluation Methods and Rules Applied

Habitats and Assessment

- 2.3.1 Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions* (Maddock, A (ed), 2008); these lists are used to help draw up the statutory lists of Priority Habitats, as required under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*. Where suitable, the ecological value of the habitats present have been assessed using the terms outlined in *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018).
- 2.3.2 QGIS has been used to calculate the total area / length of each baseline habitat present within the site and the area / length of the proposed habitats at the site.
- 2.3.3 Each habitat and individual trees have been assessed to determine whether they are 'irreplaceable habitat', defined in NPPF as '*Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen*'. The further detail presented in *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024* (GOV.UK, 2024) has also been referred to.
- 2.3.4 Proposed urban trees have been measured using the Tree Helper provided within the BNG Metric.

Relevant Guidance

- 2.3.5 Government advice on wildlife, as set out in the NPPF and associated government circulars has been taken into consideration.

Strategic Significance

- 2.3.6 The site does not lie within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy area, nor does the site have any statutory or non-statutory designation for nature conservation. For these reasons a strategic significance of 'Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy' has been applied at the BNG Metric for the area habitat units and trees.

Assumptions

- 2.3.7 Reasonable assumptions have been made in relation to the condition assessments for the proposed habitats at the site; the proposed condition assessment for each habitat is appended at **Section 7.3**. Long-term management of the proposed habitats is required to secure the proposed condition.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Site Description

3.1.1 Refer to **Figure 2**. The site is described in the ecology report as follows:

'The approximately 0.15 hectare site is located within the existing Edgar Wood Academy site and comprises hardstanding, areas of modified grassland with ornamental planting and the proposed extension keys into the existing school building.'

The site boundary lies within the wider Edgar Wood Academy site and the northern, southern and western site boundaries are not defined by physical features. The eastern site boundary is defined by the existing school building.'

3.2 Assessment of Baseline Habitats

3.2.1 **Table 3.1** provides a summary of the habitats present, their condition assessment result and their area within the site. Condition assessments for each habitat are appended at **Section 7.2**.

Table 3.1: Summary of Baseline Area Based Habitats within the Site

Habitat Reference	UK Habitat Classification Type	BNG Habitat Equivalent	Habitat Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment Result	Area (ha)
Habitat 1 Modified grassland	g4 modified grassland with the secondary codes 108 frequently mown, 814 educational premises open space and 847 introduced shrub	Modified grassland	Low	Poor	0.0855
Habitat 2 Hardstanding	u1b6 other developed land with the secondary code 814 educational premises open space.	Developed land; sealed surface	V.Low	N/A - other	0.0627
Total:					0.1482

3.2.2 The baseline BNG score for the site is provided at **Section 5.0**.

4.0 POST DEVELOPMENT HABITATS

4.1 Consideration of Mitigation Hierarchy and Target Condition Assessments

4.1.1 All habitats within the site are 'low' or 'v.low' distinctiveness. Removal of all habitats is required to facilitate the works.

4.1.2 Condition Assessments for each of the retained, enhanced and proposed habitats as specified on the landscape proposals are presented at **Section 7.3**. A long-term habitat management plan with an appropriate monitoring regime is required to secure the condition of these habitats in the long-term.

4.2 Consideration of Proposed Habitats

- 4.2.1 The proposals plan demonstrates that 0.1323 hectares of the 0.1482 hectares site (i.e. 89%) will be developed to the extension of the existing school building and car park, and the remaining 0.0159 hectares (11%) will comprise habitats created as part of the landscaping at the site.

Table 4.1: Summary of Area-based Habitats to be Created at the Site

Habitat Type	BNG Equivalent Habitat	Habitat Distinctiveness	Target Condition	Area (ha)
Proposed Habitats				
Habitat A Other neutral grassland	Other neutral grassland	Medium	Moderate	0.0159
Habitat B Development	Developed land; sealed surface	V.Low	N/A – other	0.1323
Total				0.1482

Table 4.2: Summary of Individual Trees to be Created at the Site

Habitat Reference	BNG Habitat Equivalent	Habitat Distinctiveness	Target Condition	Area (ha) ³
Proposed Habitats				
Habitat C New trees (7 small trees)	Urban tree	Medium	Moderate	0.0285
Total				0.0285

5.0 HEADLINE RESULTS, EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The headline results of the BNG Metric are presented at **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Results of Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool

On-site Baseline	Area habitat units	0.17	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site Post Intervention	Area habitat units	0.19	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units % percentage)	Area habitat units	0.02	13.20%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined Net Unit Change	Area habitat units	0.02	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total Net Unit Change	Area habitat units	0.02	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total Net % Change	Area habitat units	13.20%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	

³ Small urban trees have a diameter at breast height (DBH) of up to 30cm, medium urban trees have a DBH of 30 to 60cm, large urban trees have a DBH of 60 to 90cm and very large trees have DBH of more than 90cm. Due to the way individual trees are calculated by the metric they do not contribute to the total habitat area calculation, but are additional to it.

	Watercourse units	0.00%
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Trading Rules Satisfied?	Yes
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Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	Comment
Area habitat units	10%	0.17	0.19	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target
Hedgerow units	10%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target
Watercourse units	10%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target

- 5.2 Provided a total of seven new trees are planted within the other neutral grassland area a 10% net gain for area-based habitats is demonstrated by the BNG Metric and the trading rules are satisfied.
- 5.3 Note that trading rules will still need to be satisfied even if an overall gain of 10% is attained⁴.
- 5.4 Note that any habitats managed within the site and any off-site compensatory habitats to be enhanced by the client will be subject to a long-term habitat management plan.
- 5.5 It is essential that, in addition to the result of the BNG Metric, the assessment of biodiversity net gain takes into account the measures to be accommodated and implemented at the site to secure gains and betterment for biodiversity that the BNG Metric cannot take account of.
- 5.6 At this site it is advised that the following measures are also considered as part of the assessment of biodiversity net gain:
- Incorporation of opportunities for roosting bats at the new building;
 - Incorporation of opportunities for use by nesting birds at the developed site including in both the public open space by landscape planting and at the new building; and
 - Preparation and implementation of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (or similar) to secure long-term management of the retained and created habitats in accordance with conservation targets and objectives.

⁴ Trading rules requirements:

Habitat Distinctiveness Category	Trading Rules Requirement
Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required
Medium	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness category required
High	Same habitat required.
Very high	Same habitat required – bespoke compensation will be necessary.

6.0 REFERENCES

- CIEEM, 2016. *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development*, Winchester: CIEEM.
- CIEEM, 2018. *Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*, Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
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- GOV.UK, 2024. *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-biodiversity-gain-requirements-irreplaceable-habitat-regulations-2024>
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- LeaHough Chartered Surveyors, 2025. *BS.25-077-P-01 - Redwood Hub - Location Plan*, Blackburn: LeaHough Chartered Surveyors.
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- Maddock, A (ed), 2008. *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions*. [Online]
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- Natural England, 2023. *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool*. [Online]
Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>
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- Natural England, November 2023. *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology*, Peterborough: Natural England.
- Stace, C. A., 2010. *New Flora of the British Isles 3rd Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7.0 APPENDIX: PHOTOGRAPHS, CONDITION ASSESSMENTS AND FIGURES

7.1 Photographs

Table 7.1: Photographs of the Site

	
Photo 1: Hardstanding with modified grassland and existing school building	Photo 2: Hardstanding
	
Photo 3: Modified grassland	Photo 4: Modified grassland
	
Photo 5: Modified grassland with ornamental planting within area of hardstanding	Photo 6: Modified grassland with ornamental planting within area of hardstanding

7.2 Condition Assessments of Baseline Habitats

Table 7.2: Condition Assessments for Habitat 1: Modified Grassland

Habitat Reference	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total No. of Criterion Passed	Condition Assessment Result ¹
Habitat 10: Amenity grassland 1	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	4	Poor
Good: Passes 6 or 7 criteria including essential criterion A									
Moderate: Passes 4 or 5 criteria including essential criterion A									
Poor: Passes 3 or fewer criteria OR passes 4 to 6 criteria, but failing criterion A									

Condition Assessment Criteria
A. There are 6 to 8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in below). 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 m2 (excluding those listed below), 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. <i>Plant Species:</i> Creeping Thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>), Spear Thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>), Curled Dock (<i>Rumex crispus</i>), Broad-leaved Dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>), Common Nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), Creeping Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), Greater Plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>), White Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>) and Cow Parsley (<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>).
B. Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.
C. Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area (some scattered scrub such as Bramble may be present). Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.
D. Physical damage 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 between 1% and 10%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens. For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover
F. Cover of Bracken less than 20%.
G. There is an absence of invasive non-native species as listed on Schedule 9 of <i>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981</i> (as amended). This is assessed 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

7.2.1 No condition assessment is required for Habitat B: Hardstanding.

7.3 Condition Assessments of Retained, Enhanced and Created Habitats

Table 7.3: Condition Assessments for Habitat A: Other Neutral Grassland

Habitat Reference	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total No. of Criterion Passed	Condition Assessment Result
Habitat A: Other neutral grassland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	4	Moderate
Acid Grassland Types				Non-acid Grassland Types				
Good: passes 5 criteria				Good: passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criteria A and additional criterion F				
Moderate: passes 3 or 4 criteria				Moderate: passes 3 to 5 criteria, including essential criterion A				
Poor: passes 2 or fewer criteria				Poor: passes 2 or fewer criteria; or passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F				

Condition Assessment Criteria

A. The grassland is a good representation of the habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description). Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description.

Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.

B. Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.

C. Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens. For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover.

D. Cover of Bracken less than 20% and cover of scrub (including Bramble) less than 5%.

E. Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area (species are listed below).

If any invasive non-native plant species as listed on Schedule 9 of *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) are present, this criterion is automatically failed. This is assessed for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement.

Species indicative of sub-optimal condition for this habitat type include: Creeping Thistle, Spear Thistle, Curled Dock, Broad-leaved Dock, Common Nettle, Creeping Buttercup, Greater Plantain, White Clover, Cow Parsley. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and / or site.

Additional Group – non-acid grassland types only

F. There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced at Criterion ‘E’ cannot contribute towards this count).

Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.

7.3.1 No condition assessment is required for Habitat B: Development.

Table 7.4: Condition Assessments for Habitat C: New Trees

Tree Reference	A	B	C	D	E	F	Size Category	Total No. of Criterion Passed	Condition Assessment Result
Habitat 5.1: T1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Small	4	Moderate
									Good: Passes 5 or 6 criteria
									Moderate: Passes 3 or 4 criteria
									Poor: Passes 2 or fewer criteria

Condition Assessment Criteria
A. The tree is a native species (or more than 70% within the block are native species)
B. Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up less than 10% of total area and no individual gap being more than 5 metres wide. Individual trees automatically pass this criterion.
C. The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature). See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees, available from: <i>Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England</i> (publishing.service.gov.uk) and <i>Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions</i> (www.gov.uk). Enhancement of this habitat type is only possible by improving the habitat so that it meets Criteria B, D and F. It is not possible or appropriate to enhance individual trees through meeting just one of those Criteria, nor by meeting Criteria A, C or E.
D. There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.
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

7.4 Figures

Figure 1: Aerial Image of the Site

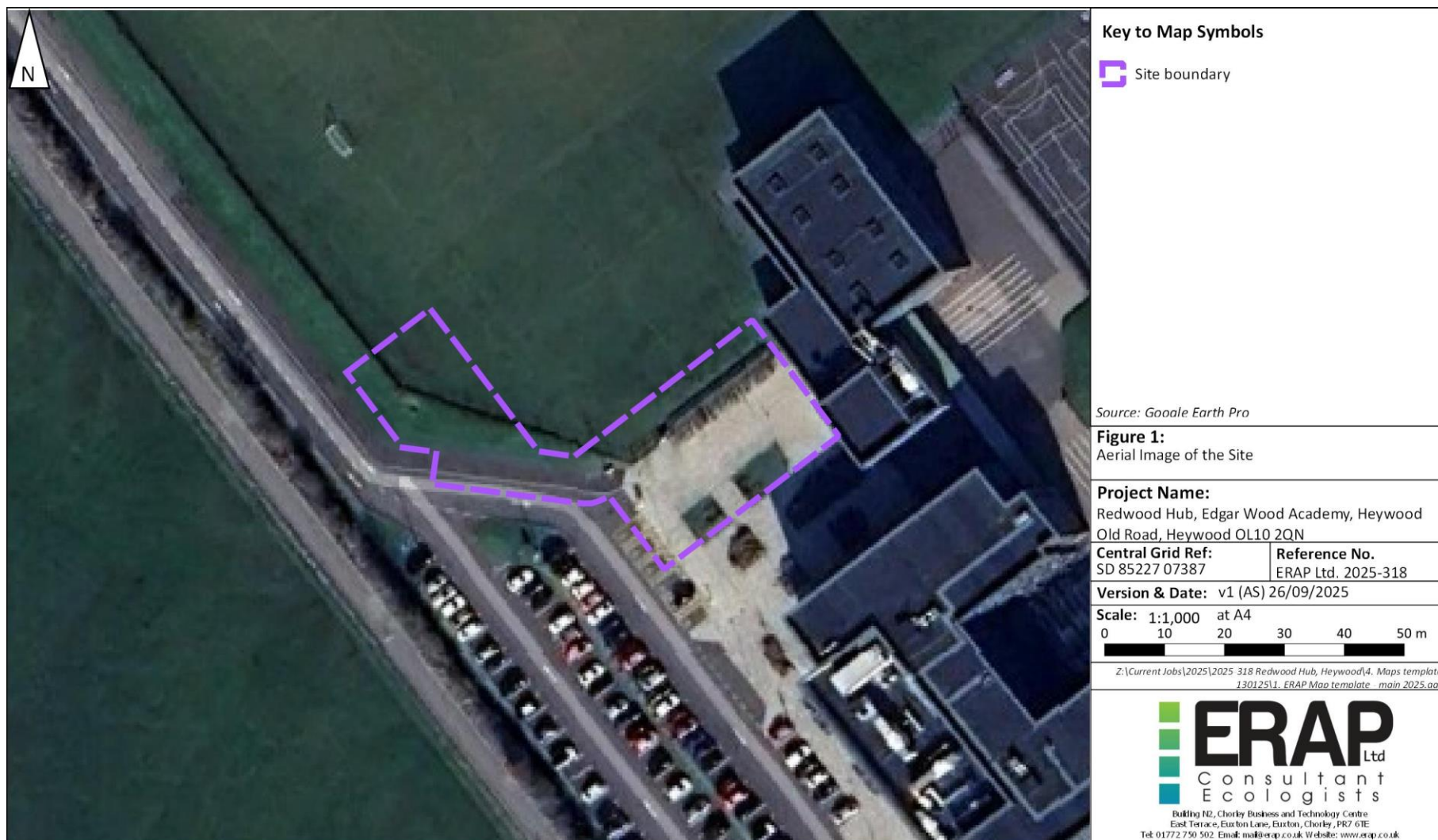


Figure 2: UKHab Plan of Baseline Habitats



Figure 3: UKHab Plan of Proposed Post-intervention Habitats

