



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

For use with
Small Sites Metric
(Statutory Biodiversity Metric)

Site Name:	Distington Community Garden
Date:	28 October 2024
Version:	1
Small Sites Criteria Met	The site fulfils the criteria for use of the Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric) calculation tool. Yes ☒ No ☐ If 'No' use the Main HMMP Template for the full statutory biodiversity metric instead of this one.



Author:



Client:



Template Document User Guide

Context – The Small Sites Metric

The Small Sites Metric Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan Template (SSM HMMPT) is designed to complement The Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric) (SSM) calculation tool. It follows the same criteria as the SSM.

The SSM calculation tool can only be applied to ‘small sites’ as defined in [The Small Sites Metric \(Statutory Biodiversity Metric\) User Guide](#).

This means:

- residential development where the number of dwellings is between 1 and 9 on a site of an area 1 hectare or less, or if the number of dwellings is unknown, the site area is less than 0.5 hectares, or
- commercial development where floor space created is less than 1,000 square metres or total site area is less than 1 hectare, or
- development that is not the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits, or
- development that is not waste development

It is not possible to use the SSM, and SSM HMMPT, on all sites defined as ‘small sites’. The following criteria also need to be met to use the SSM:

- where only the habitats available in the SSM are present on-site
- where no priority habitats are present on-site (except some hedgerows and arable field margins that are medium distinctiveness)
- where no statutory protected sites or habitats are present
- where no European protected species are present

Supporting documents

[SSM HMMPT Habitat Guide](#)

Tools and Guidance

[GOV.UK Statutory biodiversity metric \(small sites\) tools and guides](#)

[GOV.UK Government Collections Biodiversity Net Gain \(BNG\)-Guidance](#)

Template User Guide

This template provides a series of tables, figures and text boxes. Complete these to show how you'll create, enhance, manage, and monitor the biodiversity net gain (BNG) habitats.

Small Sites HMMPT Habitat Guide

The accompanying [Habitat Guide](#) provides descriptions of proposed habitat types and conditions allowed in the Small Sites Metric (SSM). These are to assist authors in preparing the habitat creation, enhancement, management and monitoring activities and instructions (the ‘prescriptions’) in sections 3 (SM-T02) and 4 (SM-T04), to achieve the required BNG outcomes. The guide includes target habitat descriptions for a range of typical habitats that can be assessed through the SSM calculation tool. The descriptions illustrate what target habitats should look like in line with the range of conditions possible in the SSM.

Use the guide to help you prepare your plan to achieve the outcomes needed for the habitat(s) selected in your metric calculation. Factor the site-specific conditions of your site into the design. Refer to reputable sources and competent professionals to inform the creation and management methods most suitable to deliver the specific habitat outcomes targeted.

Formatting

The Template uses standard Microsoft Word formatting that has not been locked for editing. Adjust it, as required, to tailor your HMMP for the specific site and according to your preferences. You can increase or reduce the text box sizes, or increase or reduce the size of images, to fit the requirements of your plan.

You can provide and reference additional photographs and plans as separate appendices if required. Provide the reference number of the appropriate appendix. If necessary to include in a

Checklist of Contents Completed		Sections completed (please tick)
1.	Project Background	
1a	Project Information	☒
1b	Planning Condition	☒
1c	Roles and Responsibilities	☒
1d	Site Boundary Plan	☒
1e	Land Use Summary	☒
1f	Site Photos	☒
1g	Site Proposals Plan	☒
2.	Management Plan Aims and Objectives	
2a	Site Aims and Objectives	☒
2b	Retained and Enhanced Habitats Protection Measures	☒
2c	Habitat Management Proposals	☒
3.	Establishment and Management	
3a	Creation, Enhancement and Management Targets and Prescriptions	☒
4.	Monitoring	
4a	Monitoring Strategy for Each Habitat, Hedgerow and Watercourse Present On-Site	☒

separate report, reference the location using the appropriate box within the template. Provide at least one photograph for each relevant area habitat, hedgerow or watercourse feature.

Text in grey is provided as a prompt. Replace grey text with your own words. Remember to change to black text then delete any remaining grey ‘prompt’ text.

Each text box in this HMMPT has a unique ID to assist reviewers. Do not change the reference code of any Boxes or Tables.

Template published by Natural England. We acknowledge the significant input from the HMMPT user-testers and production on Natural England’s behalf by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.

Checklist of Contents SM-T01

Please complete the table below to confirm the sections in this Template that have been completed.

Version Control SM-T02

Version control is used for updates to the content. Record the initial version and further version control details in this table each time the management plan is adapted throughout the management and monitoring period.

Version	Issue Status	Prepared by / Date	Approved by / Date
1	Draft	Michele Maccallam	28.1.2024

Document Details

Provide ownership, copyright and licensing information within this table.

Authorship Details
Groundwork North East and Cumbria Unit 14 Parsons Court, Welbury Way, Aycliffe Business Park, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6ZE Charity Registration 1017706 Company Registration 2702815

1. Project Background

Summarise the key aspects of your management plan in this section. Tables can be extended to suit the specific needs of individual projects.

Project information SM-T01	
Project type	Non residential
Development Name and Address	Distington Community Garden, Church Street, Distington
Author	Michele MacCallam, Groundwork North East and Cumbria
Landowner	Distington Community Trust
Land Management Organisation	Distington Community Trust
Period covered by this management plan	30 years
Planning authority	Cumberland Council
Planning reference	PP-13486390
Central OS grid reference	NZ634222
Total Site Area	7580m2

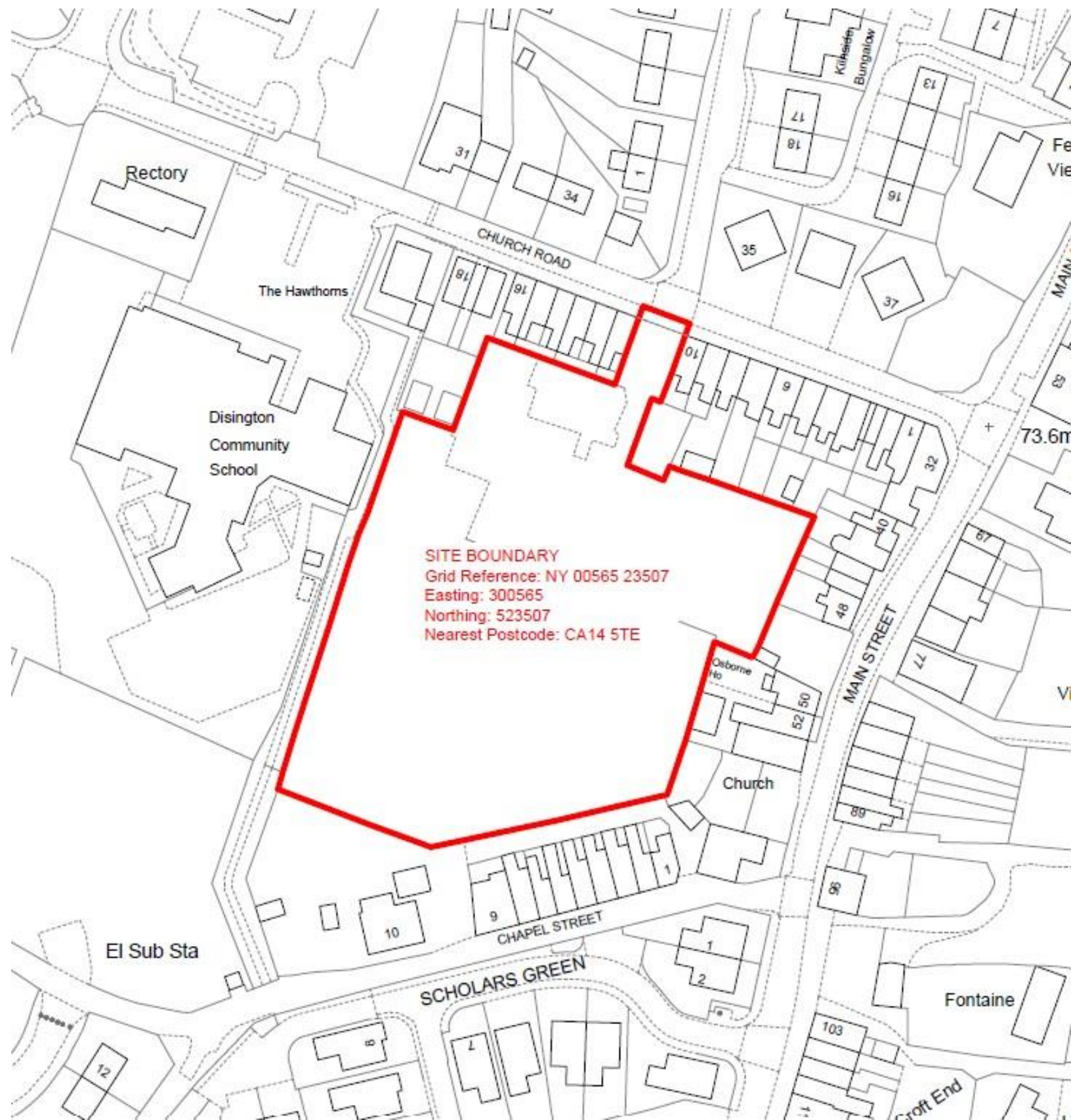
Planning Condition

Details of Planning Conditions to be Discharged by this Document SM-B02
Summarise all relevant planning conditions to be discharged through your project related to this HMMP, when available.

Roles and Responsibilities

Provide details of the responsible people and organisation(s) delivering this management plan and the legal and funding mechanisms in place to secure the habitat outcomes proposed.

Author Responsible for Preparing HMMP SM-B03			
Name or Initials / Role		Michele MacCallam, Principal Landscape Architect	
Organisation		Groundwork North East and Cumbria	
Responsibility	Start Date	N/A	End Date
Statement of Competency			
As an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect the author, Michele MacCallam, qualifies as a competent person for SSM assessment purposes. An Preliminary Ecological Assessment was completed by Ecological Consultant Rigby Jerram Responsibility started with completion of the site appraisal and will end at handover of the completed project to landowner Distington Community Trust.			
Landowner / Management Organisation Responsible for Delivering HMMP SM-B04			
Name or Initials / Role		Danielle Leigh	
Organisation		Distington Community Trust	
Responsibility	Start Date	June 2025	End Date June 2055
Statement of Competency			
Predicted end date: 2055 Predicted responsibility start of landowner: June 2025			





Land Use

Description of Site Use - Baseline SM-B05

The site is currently an unused tarmac car park and grass field with some scrub and hedgerow trees

Description of Site Use - Proposed SM-B06

On completion of the work to create a community garden, the site will include allotment gardens (18 half-size plots), orchard trees, wildflower meadow, native hedgerow and native woodland planting. The car park will refurbished to serve the local community and visitors.

The site will be managed by Distington Community Trust with a landscape contractor carrying out the creation and establishment works.

Site Photos SM-F03

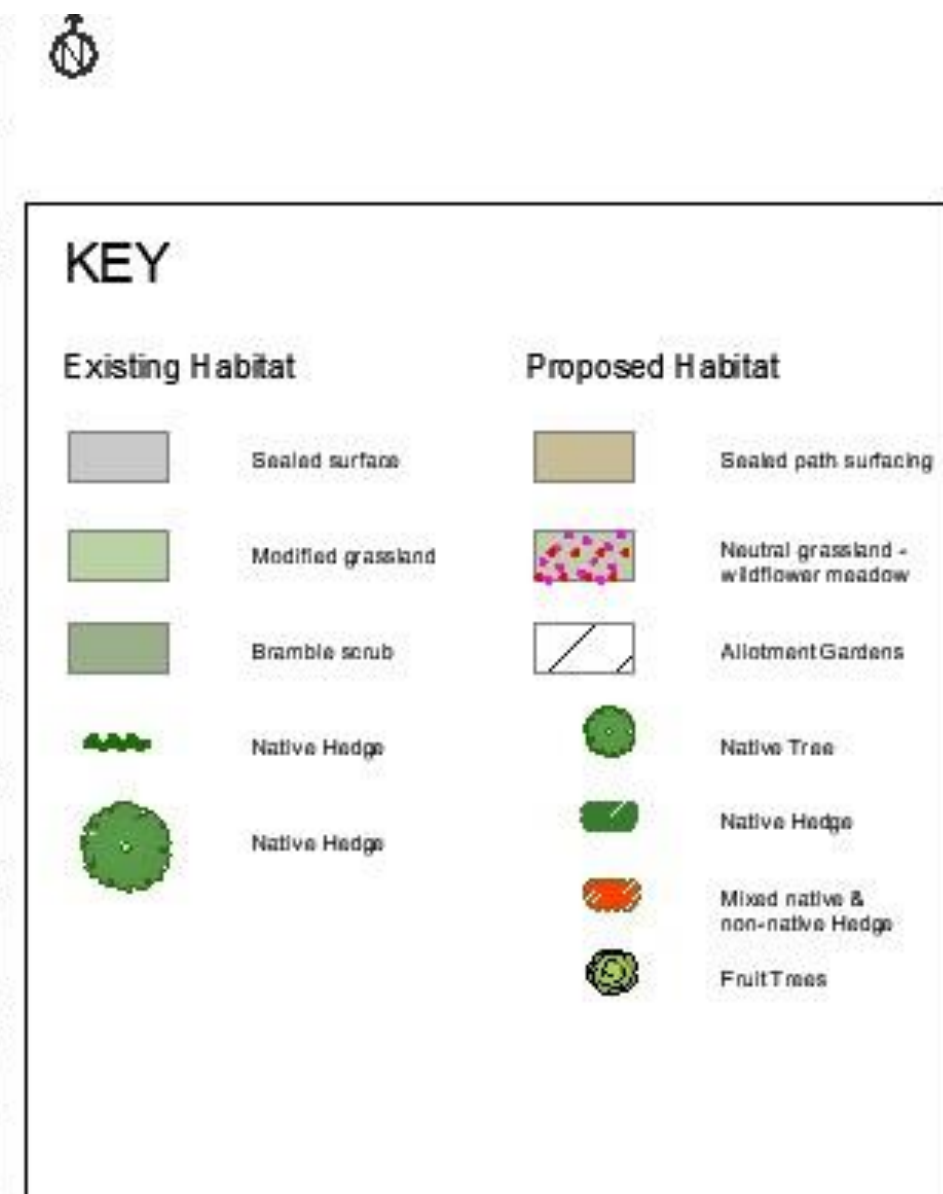
Please include two overview photographs of the site in its current form here. Include additional photographs in the appendix if needed. You can adjust the size of these to suit your management plan. Tick if additional photographs are provided in the Appendices ☐ Reference: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)





Site Proposals Plan SM-F04

As a minimum, show all the proposed habitats to be retained, created or enhanced.
The map could be on an aerial photo, or a sketch map showing mapped habitat polygons. Include parcel references if possible. It is also helpful to include a north arrow and scale.



3. Management Plan Aims and Objectives

Overview of Proposed Habitat Aims and Objectives SM-B07

The project aims to retain the site margin habitat – hedgerow, bramble scrub and boundary trees – and provide new tree planting and species-rich grassland to compensate for converting a significant area of grassland to allotment gardens

The site will be managed through a maintenance contract in accordance with a site-specific schedule of works

Retained and Enhanced Habitats Protection Measures SM-B08

The existing hedge, bramble and trees will be protected by exclusion fencing during the works

Summary of Adaptive Management Approaches SM-B09

The management plan will include an establishment period for tree and hedge planting to ensure trees are watered during periods of below average rainfall.

The monitoring surveys will record condition of the habitats and landowner will take action taken to address any issues arising, such as damage from vandalism or other activities.

Retained Habitats SM-B11

The majority of the site consists of species-poor semi-improved grassland. The grassland does not fit the criteria for any Habitats of Principal Importance or local BAP habitats. It contains only a small number of common and widespread species and can easily be recreated

The existing hedgerows, consisting predominantly (i.e. 80% or more cover) of at least one woody UK native species, are considered a Habitat of Principal Importance due to their value as corridors through the landscape. The hedgerow along the south western boundary of the site would fit these criteria although it was very unmanaged, outgrown and gappy. It contained only a small number of common species, some of which were garden escapes.

Enhanced Habitats SM-B12

N/A

Created Habitats SM-B13

New area of wildflower grassland will be created by cultivating and sowing a wildflower and grass mix. New native hedgerow will be planted and 42 native trees planted.

Allotment plots will be created by cultivating the grassland. Those plots that will not be immediately occupied and cultivated will be sown with a nitrogen-fixing cover crop to improve fertility and suppress perennial docks and thistles

Habitat Management Proposals

Habitat Baseline Description SM-B10

An area of modified grassland, bramble scrub and seven hedgerow trees. Large area of sealed tarmac and concrete surfacing

4. Creation, Enhancement and Management

Creation, Enhancement and Management Targets and Prescriptions SM-T02

Complete the planned prescriptions for each area habitat, hedgerows and watercourse proposed on-site in the table below to confirm how created and enhanced habitats will be established and managed. Include details on how retained habitats will be managed. At a minimum, list each area habitat, hedgerow or watercourse entered into the Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric) calculation tool in the ‘Habitat/Feature Type’ column in the table below (SM-T02) and provide specific creation or enhancement and management prescriptions. If preferred, provide multiple rows for the same habitat/feature type where

different prescriptions are to be used in different parcels/features, hedgerows or watercourse. Refer to the SSM HMMPT [Habitat Guide](#) for additional guidance on target habitat types and conditions to guide your prescriptions. If appending any additional documents that contain prescriptions or work schedules, please tick here and provide a reference: ☐ Reference: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Habitat/Feature Type	Target Condition	Parcel/ Feature Ref	Habitat Creation or Enhancement and Management Prescriptions
Other neutral grassland	Moderate	New wildflower meadow	New area of grassland will be sown with a wildflower / grass species mix suitable for this urban site with the aim of achieving a minimum of 9 native plant species per square metre The mix will be 100% native species including those found to be thriving in nearby wildlife sites The seed mix will be sown during optimal period of April – May 2025 The grass will be maintained through twice yearly mowing in April and late July, and arisings removed for composting, to prevent more dominant species for taking over the grassland
Hedgerow	Moderate	Hedge	Native mix of hedging plants including: Crataegus monogyna, Prunus spinosa, Corylus avellana, Viburnum opulus, Acer campestre and Rosa canina. The 1 + 1 transplants will be planted 300mm apart in a double row and thickly mulched with straw or well rotted farmyard manure. The hedge will be given space to grow to over 1.5m width and height and maintained as a continuous feature with no gaps in the canopy or lower parts of the hedge
Trees	Moderate		Native tree species will be selected: Betula pendula, Quercus robur, Prunus avium, Acer Campestre The trees will be protected from damage caused by human activities, by fixing strimmer guards to the base of the trees. The trees will be pit-planted with non-peat compost mixed with the backfill and a thick layer of bark mulch applied in a 1m2 area around the base of the tree. They will be adequately watered during the first growing season, and thereafter if dry conditions persist for an extended period. Trees will be planted with sufficient space to grow to their ultimate size with no pruning required
Allotments	Moderate	Allotments	

Risk Register and Proposed Remedial Measures SM-T03

Complete the risk register by identifying likely risks that could impede the successful delivery of target habitats, hedgerows or watercourses. List all risks that could reasonably be anticipated. This should not be an exhaustive list as it will not be possible to anticipate all potential risks.

Risk Factor	Habitat/Hedgerow/Watercourse Type	Trigger for Action	Remedial Measure
Damage by human activity due to trampling or over-use .	Modified grassland	The maintenance contract will include a requirement for the contractor to flag up any damage, vandalism or plant failures to the Community Trust when they occur. The Trust’s representative will also carry out joint inspections at yearly intervals	The Trust will then instruct the necessary action to remediate the damage or failure in order to bring the habitat back into acceptable condition. This might include re-seeding the affected area and / or erecting temporary fencing to encourage recovery

Drought	Hedgerow and trees	The Trust will monitor the habitat during periods of low rainfall to check for plant stress	Remedial measures will include instructing watering of the hedge and trees, and replacing plant material should any losses occur
Damaged by strimmers or vandalism	Trees	The Trust will monitor the site to check for damage to the plants	Remedial measures will include replacing the tree(s) if damaged to an extent where it will not recover

5. Monitoring

Monitoring Strategy for Each Habitat, Hedgerow and Watercourse Present On-Site SM-T04

Provide details of the methods you will use to monitor the progress towards the targets stated in the management plan and as agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Habitat/Feature Type	Monitoring Methods	Monitoring Interval and Timing
Modified grassland	Photographic evidence with short report describing habitat condition	Target dates: End of the landscape works maintenance period - 12 months after Practical Completion, predicted date June 2026 5 years from Completion – June 2030 10 years from Completion – June 2035 20 years from Completion – June 2045 30 years from Completion – June 2055
Hedgerow	Photographic evidence with short report describing habitat condition	As above
Trees	Photographic evidence with short report describing habitat condition	As above
Allotments		

Monitoring Reporting SM-B14

Organisation Responsible for Submitting the Monitoring Reports	Distington Community Trust	Organisation Receiving and Responsible for Reviewing Reports	Cumberland Council
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In view of the low complexity of the created habitat, the reporting strategy will comprise of short reports including photographs of the habitat types and site overview photos, together with a brief description of habitat condition, and any measures that have been taken to remediate damage or plant failures. The reports will be submitted at one year, 5 years, 10 years, 20 years and 30 years after Completion of the landscape works.

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