

TECHNICAL NOTE: BNG FEASIBILITY REVIEW

Homes by Honey

Woolley Colliery Road

December 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Homes by Honey commissioned FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR) to complete a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) feasibility assessment for Woolley Colliery Road (OS Grid Reference: SE 31336 10426), herein referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.2 This Technical Note summarises the survey and assessment methodologies employed, the survey results, and the Statutory Metric results. Any assumptions made to support the assessment have also been outlined.

Site Location and Context

- 1.3 Site occupies an area of approximately 4.1ha and is situated to the north of the village of Darton, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
- 1.4 The Site comprises three unmanaged fields of other neutral grassland bounded by unmanaged native hedgerows, located in the west, north-central and south-east of the Site. An area of hardstanding colonized by ruderal vegetation is located in the south-east of the Site adjacent to west of an access road and Manor House (previously shown on historical maps as part of a farm complex at Manor House). Some areas of the Site, particularly within the eastern area, have become colonised by bramble and other scrub.
- 1.5 The Site is bound by Bloomhouse Lane to the north beyond which is land in agricultural usage. Immediately north-west is a small industrial property (engineering works) and a public house (The Wooley). To the east of the Site is Manor House, a large residence and a area of woodland and scrub. Further east is the residential area of Maplewell. To the south is an area of residential development associated with the village of Darton. To the west is Wooley Colliery Road, beyond which is a sports field and beyond which is an area of scrub and woodland. Further to the west is a Railway Line (115m south-west), the River Dearne (200m south-west) and the M1 motorway (415m west).

Proposed Development

- 1.6 Proposals comprise a residential development of 119 dwellings with associated landscaping and infrastructure, and access via Woolley Colliery Road. 0.55ha of public outdoor space are proposed.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Baseline Habitat Assessment

- 2.1 A baseline habitat survey was completed broadly following the UKHab Classification system and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide. This involved a systematic walkover of the Site boundary to map all habitats present to assess their condition and complete the Statutory Biodiversity metric Calculation Tool. Habitat condition assessment surveys were completed following the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Condition Assessments. The summary results of the habitat condition assessment survey are presented in this report.
- 2.2 The habitat survey and condition assessment were undertaken on the 5th of November 2025, by a suitably qualified ecologist with over 3 years' experience in habitat surveying and FISC Level 3.
- 2.3 The survey was not completed during the optimal period. It is therefore recommended that an update survey be carried out in the optimum season of April – September 2026, to ensure the accuracy of the condition assessments.

Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

- 2.4 Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool was used to inform this BNG note. It is an MS Excel spreadsheet used to quantify the predicted net change in biodiversity value ("biodiversity units") of a proposed development site before and after development. It treats the area-based habitats and linear features such as hedgerows and tree lines separately and is based on pre-determined values, along with published written guidance set by a Natural England-led team of experts.
- 2.5 The Site was surveyed and mapped, as described above. The survey results were digitised using QGIS, with the existing habitats identified and areas automatically generated.
- 2.6 On-site post-development habitats were determined from the Layout Plan by Homes by Honey (Darton - V2.3 - 2025.1 - Option - Wike - VIABILITY LAYOUT - 119 UNITS) with outline proposals mapped and digitised using QGIS to generate areas for each habitat proposed for enhancement.
- 2.7 These pre- and post-enhancement habitat areas were input into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation tool. The metric automatically assigns a habitat distinctiveness score for each baseline and proposed habitat.
- 2.8 The metric also assigns a range of pre-assigned factors to each proposed habitat. Subject knowledge experts have advised these and are universal multipliers generated by the metric itself for the following variables relevant to habitat creation, enhancement or restoration proposals:
 - *difficulty of creating or restoring/enhancing a habitat*: This pre-assigned score is based on how complex a particular habitat type is to create or restore/enhance
 - *temporal risk*: this is the 'time to target condition' for any habitat and determines how long a particular habitat type is likely to take to reach the condition score that the desired condition score is assigned to it.
 - *spatial risk*: this score is based on the distance between the site of habitat loss and any habitat creation or enhancement proposals at any off-site offsetting solutions.

2.9 A desk study review has informed the strategic significance multiplier within the metric. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide provides full details of the calculation methodology.

3.0 BASELINE

Strategic Significance

3.1 A review of local policy from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and review of designated sites of conservation importance was conducted to assign strategic significance to the habitats at the Site. No areas of strategic significance were identified. The Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority was also consulted for context. Should the LNRS be published prior to planning submission it will be reviewed further and strategic significance for habitats at the Site will be updated. .

Baseline Habitats

3.2 The survey area includes other neutral grassland in three fields onsite, mixed scrub in the east of the site, and an area of blackthorn scrub in the north of site. The area of hardstanding in the east of the Site has been colonised by a variety of ruderal species. Eight native hedgerows are onsite, most of which are unmanaged and overgrown.

3.3 Table 1 below provides a summary description and baseline conditions of the baseline habitats and illustrated by Figures 1 and 4. Condition tables are provided in Appendix A and Photographs are provided in Appendix B.

Table 1: Baseline Habitat Conditions

Ref	Habitat	Condition	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment Description
G1	Other Neutral Grassland	Moderate	Medium	
G2	Other Neutral Grassland	Moderate	Medium	
G3	Other Neutral Grassland	Moderate	Medium	
S1	Mixed Scrub	Poor	Medium	
S2	Mixed Scrub	Moderate	Medium	
-	Blackthorn Scrub	Poor	Medium	
-	Bramble Scrub	N/A	Medium	Bramble Scrub is not provided a condition assessment within the BNG metric.
-	Ruderal/Ephemeral	Moderate	Low	
-	Modified Grassland	Moderate	Low	
-	Modified Grassland	Poor	Low	
-	Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface	N/A	V. Low	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface does not require a condition assessment as it scores no biodiversity units.
-	Built Linear Features	N/A	V. Low	Built linear features does not require a condition assessment as it scores no biodiversity units.
-	Vegetated Gardens	N/A	Low	Vegetated garden does not require a condition assessment as it is fixed at poor.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Site is proposed for residential development of 119 units, including provision of associated access, open space and landscaping areas. As landscaping details, such as seed mixes or tree species, are not yet known, proposed habitats and their conditions have been mapped using a reasonable and conservative approach. For example, larger grassland areas of other neutral grassland and proposed trees have been mapped in poor condition. Poor condition has also been targeted for areas of modified (amenity) grassland planting. Target conditions have been selected conservatively based on our experience, adopting a precautionary 'worst-case' approach and considering which areas are likely to experience high levels of disturbance. *Figure 2 and Figure 5* illustrate this.

4.2 Based on the current proposed layout, no new hedgerow planting is proposed. No hedgerow loss is expected under the current proposals.

Opportunities for enhancement

4.3 The allocation a higher proportion of the Site to public open space/habitat creation would improve the proposed BNG score. Targeting higher conditions for areas of other neutral grassland and newly planted native trees would be more feasible with additional open space.

4.4 Further species-rich native hedgerows could be created around the periphery of the provisioned public open space to improve the hedgerow score, or the ornamental hedgerow in the south-east of the Site could be replaced with a species rich native hedgerow.

4.5 Opportunities for enhancement will be explored in detail as part of the detailed design phase alongside assessing the proposals to ensure that the scheme can demonstrate a minimum 10% net gain via on-site or a mixture of on-site and off-site, required to discharge the mandatory BNG condition once planning permission has been received. This will be demonstrated by submitting a Biodiversity Gain Plan, which will provide full details of how the scheme will achieve the minimum BNG requirements, per the BNG PPG.

4.6 It should be noted that the BNG hierarchy requires consideration of options to meet BNG obligations within the Site where feasible. If a detailed review of the proposed habitat creation at the Site determines that a biodiversity gain will not be achievable on-site, then off-site compensation options will need to be sought to ensure that the scheme can discharge the mandatory BNG condition that will be applied.

5.0 SUMMARY OF STATUTORY METRIC

5.1 The baseline and outline habitat proposals have all been inputted into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. *Table 2* provides a summary of the headline results of the assessment completed for the proposals.

Table 2: Statutory Biodiversity Metric Headline Results

Baseline	Habitat Units	29.84
	Hedgerow Units	3.98
	Watercourse Units	-
Post-Intervention	Habitat Units	5.69
	Hedgerow Units	3.98
	Watercourse Units	-
Total Net Unit Change	Habitat Units	-24.15
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	-
Total Net Percentage Change	Habitat Units	-80.94%
	Hedgerow Units	0
	Watercourse Units	-

5.2 The Statutory Metric has demonstrated that the current scheme and assumptions will result in a loss of **24.15** habitat units, resulting in a deficit to the targeted 10% net gain.

5.3 There is no net loss of hedgerow units however this still presents a deficit of **0.4** hedgerow units to provide 10% BNG.

Habitat Trading Rules

5.4 Currently, the trading rules are unmet due to the loss of medium distinctiveness grassland and heathland and shrub units from the removal of these habitats for residential development. Though the proposals include some grassland planting, this does not compensate for the losses of the medium distinctiveness grassland and scrub habitats on site that are proposed for removal. In total, **27.16 medium distinctiveness units** would be required to demonstrate policy-compliant BNG. This can be broken down as:

- 23.34 medium distinctiveness grassland units (e.g. Other Neutral Grassland)
- 3.82 medium distinctiveness heathland & shrub units (e.g. Mixed Scrub)

5.5 As no hedgerows are proposed to be lost on-site, no hedgerow units of a specific distinctiveness level are required to be bought meet trading rules. **0.4 units** would be required to meet a 10% gain.

5.6 The short fall in hedgerow unit could be provided planting of additional hedgerow within the habitat creation proposals. There are a number of options available that would include provision of additional newly created native hedgerow within the proposed design.

Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy

5.7 The Biodiversity Net Gain hierarchy, outlined in the Government's PPG, offers guidance on prioritising habitat avoidance, retention, and compensation for more valuable habitats. These measures should shape the Site design.

5.8 The Site has only a relatively small area of low distinctiveness habitats and comprises predominately of medium distinctiveness habitats with moderately high ecological value. As such, proposed losses impact these medium distinctiveness habitats (areas of scrub and other neutral grassland) the greatest. Where feasible, efforts should be made to preserve habitats with medium distinctiveness.

Compensation

5.9 10% net gain is deemed unachievable on-site in respect to the proposed design. Compensatory units would be required to be delivered through the following options, in order of preference and in accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy:

- **Bespoke Compensation:** An agreement could be sought with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to deliver bespoke compensation somewhere within the authority area. For example, habitat enhancement or creation within Local Wildlife Sites.
- **Purchasing Units from a Local Habitat Bank:** Where an agreement cannot be agreed for bespoke compensation, units could be purchased from any habitat banks run by the local planning authority or a private provider. This will be delivered within the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council/same National Character Area where possible.
- **Purchasing Units from a Nearby Habitat Bank:** Where units are not available in the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council area or same National Character Area, units could be purchased from a habitat bank in an adjacent Local Planning Authority Boundary/National Character Area.
- **Purchasing Units from a National Habitat Bank:** Where a local habitat bank cannot be identified, units could be purchased from a habitat bank elsewhere in England. Proximity will be considered while sourcing units, and the closest available units are preferred.
- **Purchasing Statutory Credits:** Where units cannot be sought from a national habitat bank, statutory credits will be purchased as a last resort.

5.10 To ensure the allocation of off-site units to a development, units are required to be registered on Natural England's BNG Sites Register. Consequently, units will be secured under a minimum 30-year legal agreement, with habitat enhancements delivered through an agreed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).

5.11 The delivery of off-site habitat units will be secured through the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain condition imposed by the Environment Act 2021. Details of the off-site provision will be supplied as part of a Biodiversity Gain Plan, which is to be submitted following receipt of planning permission under the Environment Act 2021 requirements.

Securing BNG

5.12 Further details regarding habitat creation, enhancement, and management should be provided at the detailed design stage of the proposals, where ecologists will directly input into landscape planting. A HMMP will also be included as part of a Biodiversity Gain Plan, which, under the requirements of the Environment Act, will be submitted following receipt of full planning permission. This HMMP will detail how the creation, retention, and enhancement of habitats across the Site that significantly contribute to the Site's BNG will be managed for a minimum of 30 years.



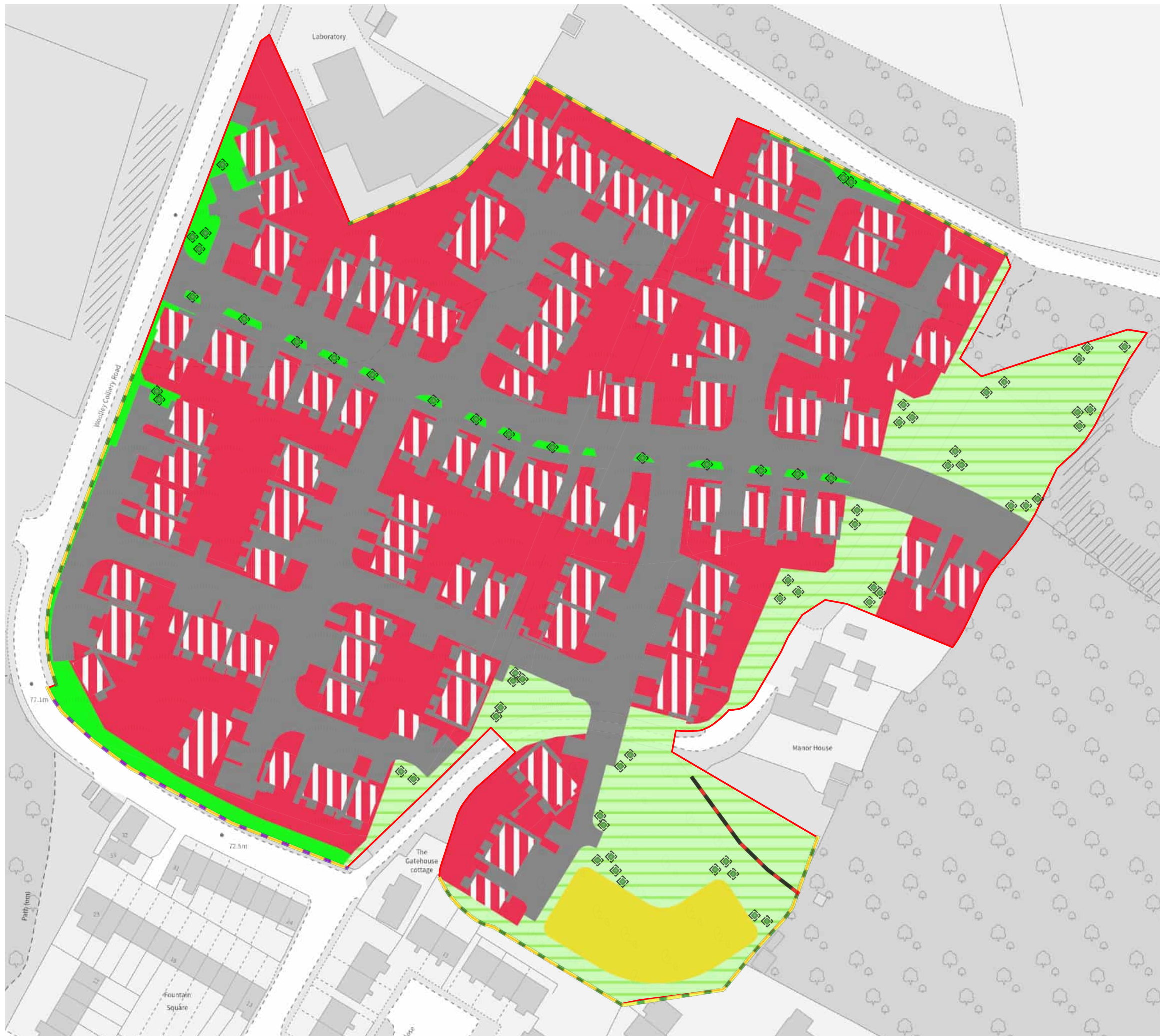
- Redline Boundary
- Baseline Habitats**
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Blackthorn scrub
- Bramble scrub
- Built linear features
- Mixed scrub
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Ruderal/Ephemeral
- Vegetated garden
- Baseline Hedgerow**
- Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- Native hedgerow
- Native hedgerow with trees

date 04/12/25 drwn/chkd
JDS/SAM

client **Homes by Honey**
 project **Woolley Colliery Road, Darton**

title **BASELINE HABITAT PLAN** scale
1:1,000 @ A3

number **FIGURE 1** rev
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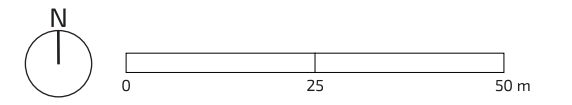
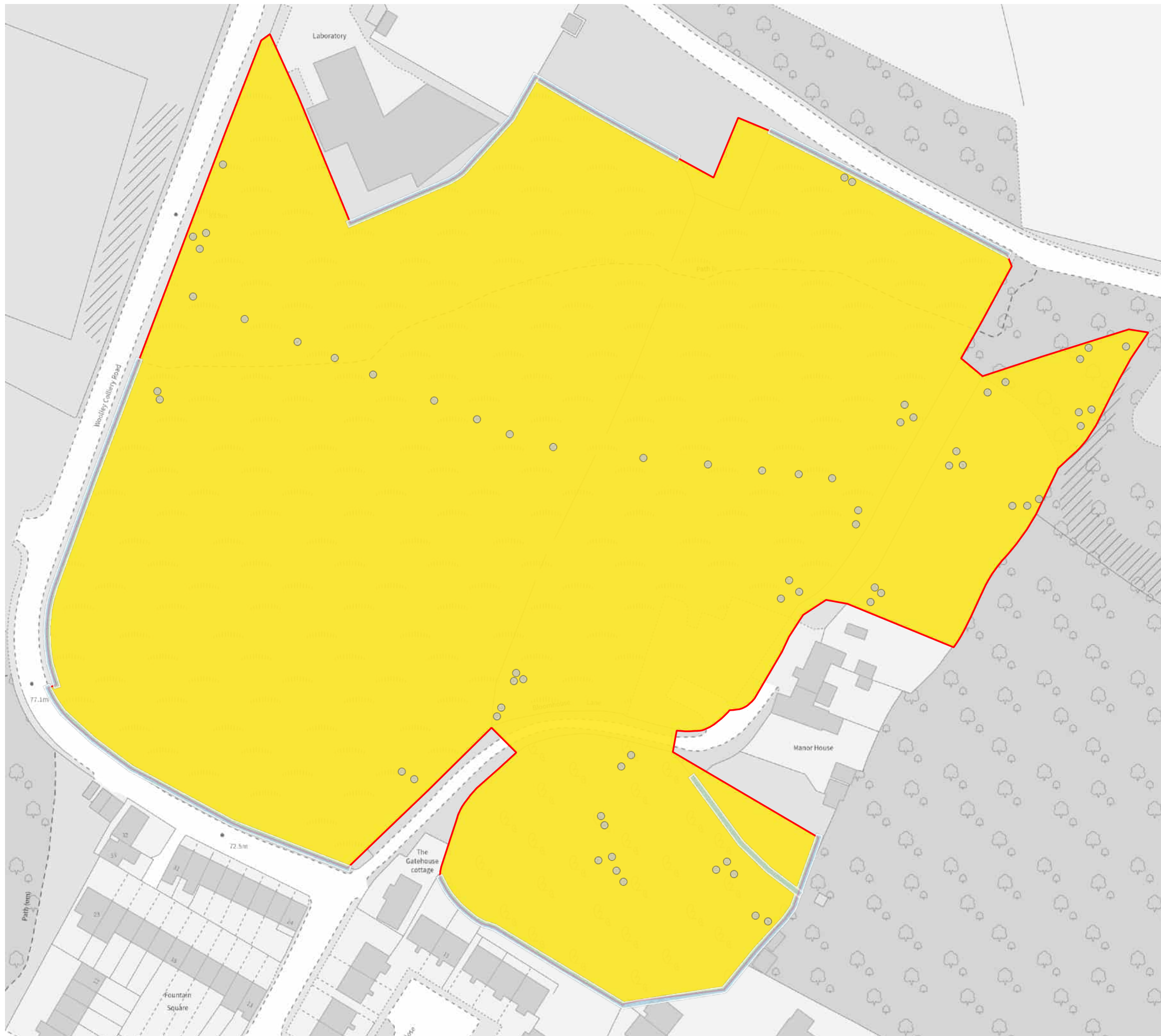
- Redline Boundary
- Proposed Habitats**
- Built linear features
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Sustainable drainage system
- Vegetated garden
- Proposed Hedgerows**
- Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- Native hedgerow
- Native hedgerow with trees
- Proposed Individual Trees**
- Proposed small urban tree

date 04/12/25 drwn/chkd
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client
Homes by Honey
project
**Woolley Colliery Road,
Darton**

title **PROPOSED HABITAT PLAN** scale
1:1,000 @ A3

number **FIGURE 2** rev
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- Redline Boundary
- Habitats**
- Lost
- Hedgerows**
- Retained
- Individual Trees**
- Created

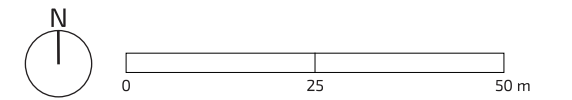
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client **Homes by Honey**

project **Woolley Colliery Road,
Darton**

title **HABITAT RETENTION PLAN** scale
1:1,000 @ A3

number **FIGURE 3** rev
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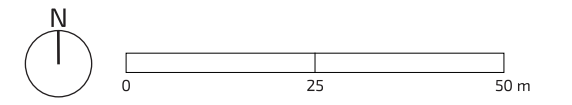
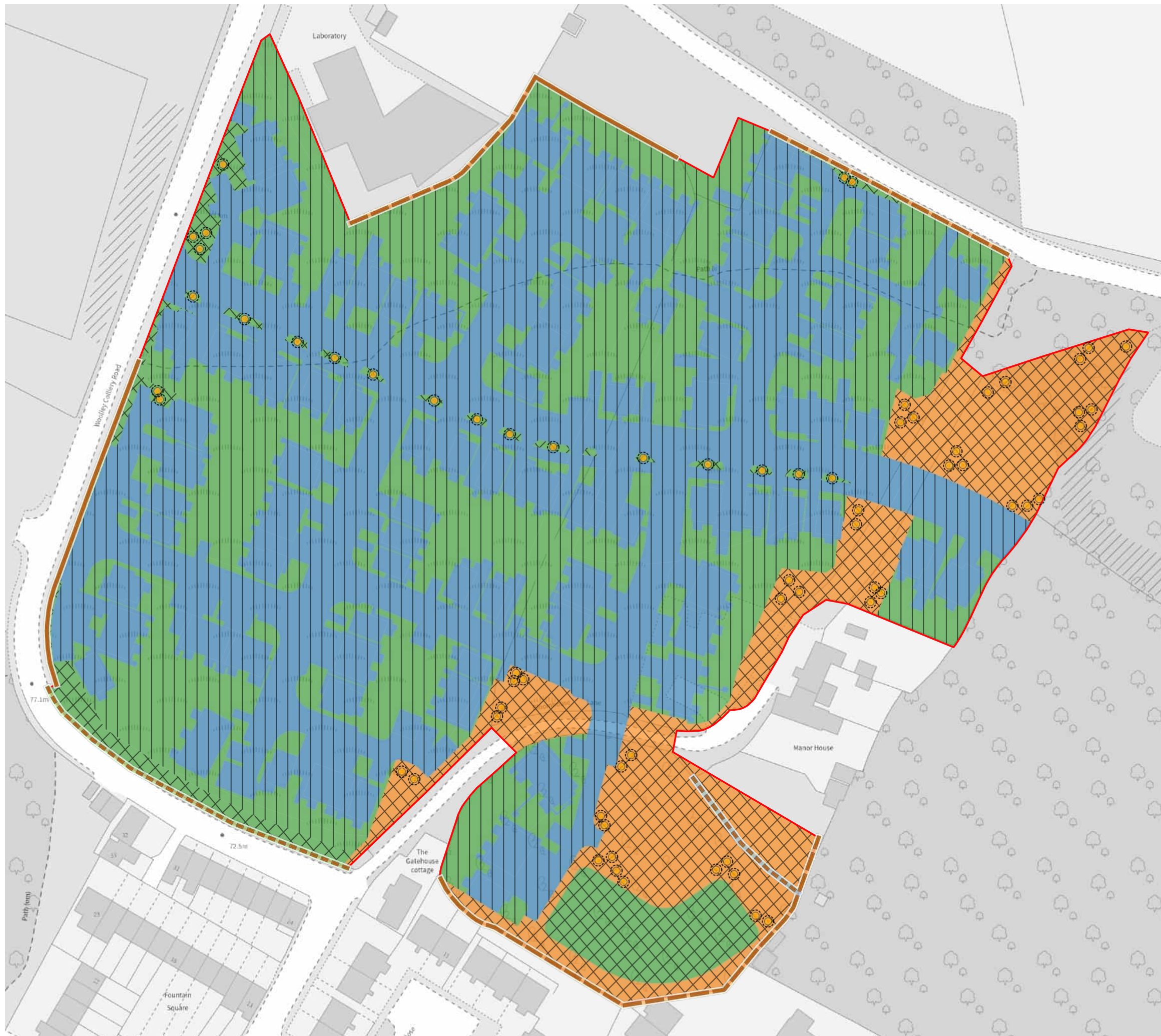


- Redline Boundary
- Baseline Habitat Condition**
- Moderate
- Poor
- Condition Assessment N/A
- Baseline Habitat Distinctiveness**
- Medium
- Low
- V.Low
- Baseline Hedgerow Condition**
- Good
- Moderate
- Poor
- Baseline Hedgerow Distinctiveness**
- Medium
- Low
- V.Low

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client **Homes by Honey**
 project **Woolley Colliery Road, Darton**

title **BASELINE HABITAT CONDITION AND DISTINCTIVENESS PLAN** scale 1:1,000 @ A3
 number **FIGURE 4** rev -



- Redline Boundary
- Proposed Habitat Condition
 - Poor
 - N/A - Other
 - Condition Assessment N/A
- Proposed Habitat Distinctiveness
 - Medium
 - Low
 - V.Low
- Proposed Hedgerow Condition
 - Good
 - Moderate
 - Poor
- Proposed Hedgerow Distinctiveness
 - Medium
 - Low
 - V.Low
- Proposed Individual Tree Condition
 - Poor
- Proposed Individual Tree Distinctiveness
 - Medium

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client **Homes by Honey**
 project **Woolley Colliery Road,
 Darton**

title **PROPOSED HABITAT CONDITION AND DISTINCTIVENESS PLAN** scale 1:1,000 @ A3
 number **FIGURE 5** rev -